

No Jordanians hurt in Indonesian riots

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tuesday said Jordanian citizens in Indonesia are safe and well following the riots there. Information department spokesperson Ibrahim Dabbas said a total of 64 Jordanians live in the Indonesian cities that have been hit by rioting and looting. The embassy in Jakarta has been in touch with Royal Jordanian to transport Jordanian nationals wishing to leave the country, he said, adding that some citizens have already left for home (see story on Indonesia on page 12).

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية للرأي

Cook works to mend EU-Turkey ties

ANKARA (AP) — British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook arrived in Ankara Tuesday in a bid to mend strained relations between Turkey and the European Union (EU). "I want to prepare for a successful meeting of the EU-Turkey Association Council next Monday in Brussels," Mr. Cook said when he arrived. "I hope today we can agree between ourselves on a basis that will make it a successful meeting and puts Europe and Turkey back on track for a closer successful relations," he added before leaving for talks with Foreign Minister Ismail Cem. Relations have been tense since the EU's decision last December to exclude Turkey from the union's immediate enlargement plans. Mr. Cook was expected to arrive with a "strategy document" setting up a framework for future relations between the EU and Turkey.

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King to meet members of three branches of government today

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein will meet with the members of the executive, legislative and judicial authorities today at the Royal Court, according to a statement following a Cabinet meeting Tuesday.

The announcement was made by Acting Minister of Information Nasser Lawzi one day after the King met with the council of union presidents, during which relations between the professional associations and the government were discussed.

Lawzi said Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali briefed the Council of Ministers on the King's meeting with the union presidents, during which he also reviewed Jordan's political stand.

During the meeting with the heads of the 13 unions, the King ordered the release of

opposition figure and former president of the Jordan Engineers Association, Leith Shbeilat, who was recently sentenced to nine months in jail.

According to Mr. Lawzi, the council reviewed Mr. Shbeilat's case and the King's pardon.

Mr. Shbeilat was sentenced by the State Security Court last Tuesday for instigating February's Ma'an riots. But his lawyer, Hussein Mijali, said he was appealing the verdict at the Court of Cassation.

Mr. Lawzi said that the court's verdict was not final, adding that "in terms of procedures, if Shbeilat's lawyers decide not to appeal, the verdict will be final and Shbeilat will be subject to the King's pardon. But if the lawyers decide to appeal, then the Court of Cassation can either

endorse the State Security Court's verdict or acquit Shbeilat."

"Should the Court of Cassation uphold the State Security Court's verdict, then the sentence will again be final and the Council of Ministers will seek the King's pardon," he added.

On Middle East developments, Mr. Lawzi said Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority are maintaining constant coordination. Jordan is working to give impetus to the peace process by following up on contacts with the Palestinian side, and the King is continuing his efforts with all concerned parties, he added.

On the prospect of holding a Jordanian-Egyptian summit, Mr. Lawzi said no date has yet been set for such a meeting.

During Tuesday's regular session, the Cabinet endorsed

an amendment to a grant from the United States Agency for International Development to finance the Kingdom's population and family health strategy. The amendment provides for increasing the original grant by \$5.7 million to the new total of \$20.12 million.

The Council of Ministers also resolved to establish diplomatic relations with Guyana in South America at the non-resident ambassadorial level.

It also approved the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and authorized Jordan's ambassador to the U.N. to sign it.

The Cabinet endorsed a memorandum of understanding between the Civil Aviation Authority and the International Civil Aviation Organisation on the establishment of regional training centre in Amman.

Politicians hail new spirit ushered in by King's meeting with union leaders

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Politicians yesterday hailed His Majesty King Hussein's recent meeting with union leaders as a step that would give a new momentum to the Kingdom's democratisation process, challenged by increasing popular frustration over the 14-month deadlock in the peace process and resulting economic stagnation.

"It is a good beginning and we hope that further moves will follow in the same direction in order to foster serious dialogue between the government and all political forces," Islamic Action Front (IAF) Secretary General Abdul Latif Arabiyat said of King Hussein's surprise visit on Monday to the headquarters of the Union of Professional Associations.

The King on Monday also announced the release of outspoken opposition figure Leith Shbeilat, a self-styled Islamist jailed for allegedly instigating the pro-Iraq Ma'an riots in February.

Mr. Shbeilat, 56, has already been imprisoned twice. He was pardoned by the King both times.

Observers said that by meeting the union leaders and releasing Mr. Shbeilat the

King means to restore a climate of trust and understanding between the government and the opposition.

An extended meeting with members of government, Parliament and the judiciary today at the Royal Court has raised expectations that a new era of openness and greater cooperation among the three authorities will be ushered in. The King is expected to address regional and local issues and outline future steps for the three branches of state.

Observers said they also expected that the stalemate in the peace process, deadlocked by the intransigent policies of the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to figure high on the agenda of today's meeting.

Monday's meeting with the presidents of the 80,000-strong unions — vocal critics of the 1994 peace treaty with Israel — came after the King criticised Mr. Netanyahu's "contradictory" statements on peace and said the Jewish state was slipping into a fortress mentality.

"In the current crisis plaguing the peace process due to Mr. Netanyahu's intransigence and insistence on exploding the situation instead of realising peace... in the face of all these fears, Jordanians only have the choice of searching



for things that unify them and boost dialogue between them to strengthen their country... this is the duty of both the government and the opposition," columnist Taher Adwan wrote yesterday in the Arabic daily Al Arab Al Yawm.

The King has worked hard to promote a peace between peoples, not only governments, but Israel's rejection of a U.S. proposal for an Israeli withdrawal from a further 13

per cent of the West Bank has narrowed the chances of Palestinians and Israelis returning to the negotiating table any time soon.

King Hussein has warned that Mr. Netanyahu's policies could trigger violence that would spread beyond Israel and the Palestinian territories. Observers say the leadership is aware of the possibility of

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Socialists put onus on Israel to bring life into Palestinian-Israeli peace track

Combined agency dispatches

A MEETING of the Socialist International in Oslo on Tuesday urged Israel to "bring the (Middle East) peace process back on track."

A statement also urged the Israeli government "to desist from unilateral practices, particularly those of collective punishment, which undermine mutual confidence, and to bring the settlement policies aimed at establishing a de facto situation in the occupied territories, to an immediate close."

The meeting expressed its "deep concern" at the deadlocked peace process, which it said "can lead to an escalation of further violence."

The 300 delegates underlined that an Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories would allow the Palestinians to "practice their inalienable right to self-determination and the setting up of an independent Palestinian state."

Stressing that the peace process is based "primarily on the principle of 'land-for-peace,'" they supported the

present efforts by the United States, the European Union, Egypt, Norway and others to assist the parties in implementing their commitments, including redeployment of the Israeli army on the West Bank.

The Socialist International, meeting in Oslo where the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian peace accords were negotiated, urged the two parties to tackle problems concerning Jerusalem, the settlements, refugees and borders.

Meanwhile, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday of trying to provoke a crisis by rejecting U.S. proposals aimed at reviving the peace process.

"Clearly Netanyahu is escalating in a direction against the agreement and is trying to create a crisis situation," Mr. Arafat told reporters in Bethlehem.

He was attending a ceremony with former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and World Bank President James Wolfensohn to announce the creation of a "Peace Technology Fund" which has already

raised about \$50 million from Arab, Israeli, Palestinian and international private donors.

Mr. Arafat said he was ready to negotiate the creation of a Palestinian state with the Israelis after the interim period of Palestinian autonomy.

"The interim period ends in May 1999. At that time it is all right to immediately begin talks with the other side and the international community about the state," he said.

Mr. Arafat's spokesman, Nabil Abu Rudeina, said that "nothing encouraging" came out of the Palestinian leader's talks with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in London on Monday.

"There is nothing encouraging. The Israelis are still refusing U.S. ideas," he said.

The United States has proposed that Israel pull back from another 13 per cent of the West Bank, but Mr. Netanyahu has rejected the proposal on security grounds.

"Albright assured Arafat that they will not change their proposal. But if they do step back from their proposals, then we will adopt a new position," Mr. Abu Rudeina said.

Mr. Netanyahu said Monday he wanted a "closed deal" setting the size of all three withdrawals from the West Bank that the Israelis had agreed to carry out.

But he repeated demands that the Palestinians first launch a stepped-up crackdown on anti-Israeli activists as a precondition.

Near Hebron, an Israeli army jeep was raked with automatic weapons fire overnight but no one was injured, an Israeli military spokesman said Tuesday.

"Israeli soldiers returned fire against the assailants, who managed to flee towards the sector of Hebron controlled by the Palestinian (National) Authority," the spokesman said.

"Several bullet holes were found in the jeep and an empty magazine was found near the scene of the attack," he added.

Six Palestinians were injured in Hebron on Monday in a fifth day of clashes between Israeli soldiers and stone-throwing protesters in the town, one-fifth of which is under Israeli control.

At AIPAC conference:

Muasher: Israel not serious about final status talks

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan's Ambassador to the U.S. Marwan Muasher on Sunday told a policy conference of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in Washington that Israel's rejection of the land-for-peace principle casts serious doubts about the Jewish state's willingness to reach a settlement with the Palestinians.

"The feeling in the Arab World today is that the Israeli government is not serious about final status negotiations, and will not put forward any serious proposals to cede land and arrive at a credible final settlement," Dr. Muasher, who is also a former minister of information and Jordan's first ambassador to Israel, said.

The first Jordanian official to address an AIPAC conference, Dr. Muasher reiterated Jordan's commitment to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. But if the Jordanian model of peace fails, he said, "it would be difficult to imagine any other model being put forward,

supported and succeeding."

Dr. Muasher voiced Jordan's frustration at the rejection by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of a U.S. proposal for an Israeli withdrawal from a further 13 per cent of the West Bank.

Israel insisted on withdrawing from a further nine per cent of the West Bank only.

"This opposition, based on an unwillingness to cede a further four per cent of the West Bank, sends exactly the wrong message not only to the Palestinians, but also to the Arab World."

Dr. Muasher reiterated that Jordan will never be a substitute land for the Palestinians, as some Israelis would like it to be.

He said Jordan's position on Jerusalem is that the Holy City is an occupied Arab land, which must be returned to the Palestinians according to the land-for-peace formula, international law, and U.N. resolutions (see full text of Dr. Muasher's speech on page 7).

Car bomb kills Lebanese

MARIAYOUN (AFP) — A booby-trapped car exploded killing its civilian driver Tuesday at a crossing point into territory controlled by the pro-Israeli South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia, witnesses said.

The driver, who has not been identified, was killed instantly when he opened his car door at the Kafarna checkpoint leading from government-held territory to the SLA-held town of Jezzin. Hizbollah said in a state-

ment released in Beirut that it mounted the attack which was aimed at an SLA patrol.

A Lebanese civilian was wounded in another explosion Tuesday in southern Lebanon close to the Israeli-occupied border strip, Lebanese police said.

Fadwan Al Khaled was wounded in the legs and hip while picking thyme in a field near the village of Kaakayat Al Jisr in an area controlled by the U.N. peacekeeping force, UNIFIL, they said.

U.S. wants Iraq food plan renewed automatically

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The United States wants the U.N.-Iraqi oil-for-food programme renewed automatically, for as long as sanctions are in place, rather than renegotiated every six months, diplomats said over the weekend.

They said that earlier U.S. proposals for the plan to stay in place for 18 months without renewals had been dropped after objections from several Security Council members. But the revised proposal has met

with similar opposition from council members familiar with it.

At issue is the oil-for-food programme that allows Iraq to sell oil to purchase food, medicine and other supplies. The plan, which began in December 1996, runs for six-month periods, after which the distribution of the goods is renegotiated.

Several countries interviewed agreed in principle with the U.S. proposals,

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AI urges Israel to halt torture

GENEVA (AP) — Amnesty International (AI) on Tuesday urged the Israeli Supreme court to declare illegal the use of torture and ill-treatment during interrogation of Palestinian prisoners.

The human rights organisation backed the ruling Monday by the U.N. Committee Against Torture that Israel should immediately cease practices that violate the global accord against torture.

The committee has refused to accept Israel's use of "hooding, kneeling in painful positions, sleep deprivation and shaking" against detainees.

"Amnesty International urges the supreme court to take note of the Committee's recommendations," a statement said.

The court is to hold its second session Wednesday to review the legality of official rules which apparently authorise Israel's General Security Service (GSS), also known as Shin Bet, to use such interrogation methods.

The court should "declare illegal all GSS interrogation methods which violate the convention's prohibition on torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment," amnesty said.

Shin Bet admits using such "unorthodox" practices, but argues that the methods were a



SHIN BET'S BANANA: An Israeli actor demonstrates the "banana" method, one of several standard torture techniques reportedly used by the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security agency, during interrogations of Palestinian prisoners, at a press conference in Jerusalem Tuesday. The human rights group B'tselem, hoping to influence public opinion on the eve of a landmark court case to rule on whether the use of torture during interrogations of suspected Palestinian militants is justified, released a report Tuesday, saying "the torture of Palestinians is a bureaucratic and everyday practice." (AP photo)

successful tool in the fight against terrorism.

The U.N. panel acknowledged Israel's claim that it needs tough tactics to counter terrorism, but said, "this cannot justify torture."

It emphasised that the Convention Against Torture, which

Israel has signed, declares that no public emergency of any kind justifies the use of torture.

"If interrogation rules continue to sanction torture and ill-treatment, as they do now, GSS agents will still be able to use such methods with impunity,"

said the Amnesty statement.

The U.N. torture panel, which meets in Geneva twice a year to review, in turn, the performance of the 105 countries that have pledged to uphold the convention, also concluded last year that Israel was violating the accord.

Netanyahu spokesman: Sarah 'not the most stable woman in the world'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Sarah Netanyahu, the wife of the Israeli prime minister, was again at the centre of controversy on Tuesday after her husband's spokesman was quoted by a U.S. magazine as casting doubt on her mental health.

The latest issue of the New Yorker includes a lengthy profile of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and quotes his spokesman, David Bar-Ilan, as saying: "Sarah is not the most stable woman in the world."

"Had she run half-naked through the streets it might have been something else, but it's under control," Mr. Bar-Ilan was quoted as saying.

"Now, she only appears at appropriate things; receptions

for children, things for the retarded or the disadvantaged. And it works. It's OK. Finally it's become boring to Israelis."

Mr. Bar-Ilan categorically denied making the remarks.

"I did not say any of those things, and they did not come back to me to check. This is outrageous," he said.

"What I told the New Yorker journalist is that the first lady is expected to be concerned with charity work and that she is doing it very well. He changed my statements," Mr. Bar-Ilan told Israeli public radio.

The spokesman added that he will continue to work for Mr. Netanyahu as long as the prime minister wants his services. The Israeli press has given

prominent coverage to the Bar-Ilan interview while paying scant attention to his denial.

According to the New Yorker, Mr. Bar-Ilan also criticised his boss for publicly admitting to adultery before his election two years ago.

"One thing is to have an affair with a shiksa [non-Jewish woman]. But a married woman! With a shiksa even the rabbis [rabbis] do it. But a married woman!"

"For years in Israel no one cared about such things. Moshe Dayan screwed half the women in the army and even got in trouble about it, but we said we didn't care," the magazine quoted him as saying about the deceased general and defence

minister.

The prime minister himself refused to comment on the matter except to say "I don't concern myself with gossip."

But the Israeli press defended the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who wrote the piece, David Reemick.

Mr. Reemick said, "while Bar-Ilan may regret saying some of the things, he did say them. I would not have quoted him if he didn't say it."

Sarah the prime minister's third wife, has been a favourite target of the Israeli media since her husband was elected in May 1996.

She is often described as jealous, proud and tyrannical.

ملكوته لامل

Kuwaiti FM stays mum on resignation, continues duties

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait's veteran Foreign Minister Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah on Tuesday stayed mum on reports of his resignation over policy differences with the prime minister.

"I have no comment to make... and the media has overblown the whole issue," Sheikh Sabah, who is also first deputy prime minister, told the daily Al Rai Al Aam.

In keeping with his duties as foreign minister, Sheikh Sabah welcomed his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Hamad bin Jasssem bin Jaber Al Thani on his arrival in Kuwait on Tuesday.

Al Anbaa newspaper, meanwhile, said a delegation from the ruling family, led by Defence Minister Salem Al Sabah, was trying to persuade Sheikh Sabah to withdraw his resignation.

But he has so far refused to back down because "he refuses

to take responsibility for certain policies which could have serious negative repercussions" on Kuwait, a source close to Sheikh Sabah told Al-Dabas daily.

According to newspapers, the foreign minister handed in his resignation to the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, on Sunday and missed the last cabinet meeting.

"This may simply be an internal way to resolve differences within the ruling family," Sheikh Sabah apparently wants the emir to do something to balance the cabinet team and have his viewpoint heard," one diplomat said.

Diplomats said he was opposed to last week's visit by Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, spiritual guide of the Palestinian Islamic movement Hamas, who was invited by Prime Minister and Crown Prince Saad Al Abdullah Al Salim Al Sabah.

Sheikh Yassin was the first Palestinian leader to visit Kuwait since the 1991 Gulf War when the emirate accused the Palestinians of siding with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The Hamas leader's visit was probably "the last straw" for the disgruntled foreign minister, one diplomat said.

Political insiders also pointed to differences over oil policy, notably domestic fuel prices, and said the resignation was the result of a number of rows within the cabinet.

Sheikh Sabah has reportedly been in dispute with his colleagues over reforms aimed at cutting the state budget deficit, and he is said to have complained of "interference" in the running of foreign affairs.

Born in 1929, Sheikh Sabah has served as foreign minister almost uninterrupted for the past 35 years.



WORLD'S BIGGEST FLAG: Turkish youths unfold the world's biggest flag Tuesday during the celebrations of the Sports and Youth holiday at Ali Sami Yen Football Stadium. The flag is sized 52x78 metres, weighs one tonne and was carried by about 400 students in the display. Organisers are expecting a delegation from the Guinness Book of Records to verify the claim (Reuters photo)

Egyptian police seize 400 pairs of footwear deemed insulting to Islam

CAIRO (AP) — Police Tuesday arrested nine shoe owners and confiscated 400 pairs of shoes and slippers deemed insulting to Islam because the brand name resembled the Arabic word for God.

"Fila" was printed in Latin letters on the soles of the footwear in script that looked similar to "Allah," Arabic for God, said a police official, who spoke on customary condition of anonymity.

An Egyptian law bans the sale of items which ridicule religions. Putting sacred symbols or words on shoes is particularly insulting because they

are considered dirty. Islam the official religion of 95 per cent of Egypt's 63 million people.

It was not clear what the shop owners might have done. The raids were carried out across the country. Police said the footwear was produced in east Asia.

Last week, the Education Ministry asked the American University in Cairo to stop teaching "Muhammad" book by French author Maxime Rodinson, on grounds that the book argued the Koran is the holy book, was written by the Prophet himself.

Israeli supreme court reviews religious exemption from military service

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's supreme court began considering Tuesday whether to limit religious exemptions which many young Orthodox Jews claim to get out of compulsory military service.

For two hours, the court heard arguments from the parties who filed the lawsuit a year ago, secular leftist Meretz party MPs Amnon Rubinstein and Haim Oron and five Israeli army reservists.

Hearings are expected to continue for several days, court officials said.

The MPs' lawyer, Hanan Akhazav, told Israel radio that "the number of exemptions is huge and violates the principle of equality."

Messrs. Rubinstein and Oron are seeking a ceiling on the number of exemptions.

They said that when it was adopted at the beginning of the 1950s the law anticipated that only a few hundred Orthodox Jews would take advantage of the exemption, which is granted to those who study in seminaries, or yeshivot, from the ages of 18 to 27 and do not work.

According to figures the Israeli military gave the court, 28,377 ultra-Orthodox youth, or nearly eight per cent of draftees, are currently claiming the exemption.

Mr. Rubinstein told Israeli radio Tuesday that "this figure grows by one per cent every year, and we risk soon arriving at the point where one out of every 10 draftees will get out of military service."

Government representative Uzi Fogelman said the number of exemptions did not affect state security, public radio reported.

Israel arrests five followers of rabbi over official's murder

PETAH TIKVA (AFP) — Israeli police arrested five followers of a jailed rabbi over involvement in the car bomb murder of a prison official earlier this month, judicial officials said Tuesday.

Three of the followers of Rabbi Uzi Meshulam were ordered held for six days of questioning, while the two others were put under house arrest by a court in Petah Tikva, outside Tel Aviv, the officials said.

They are suspected of involvement in the May 6 car-bombing which killed Yaakov Zieglerbaum, a physician who oversaw an education and rehabilitation department in the prison service, near the central Israeli city of Ramla.

Turkish, German FMs plan reconciliation in Palermo

ISTANBUL (AFP) — The foreign ministers of Turkey and Germany plan to meet in Palermo, Italy, in early June to smooth out troubled relations, Turkey's Ismail Cem said in an interview published Tuesday.

"We decided to try and arrange something... in Palermo," the foreign minister told the English-language Turkish Daily News, referring to the EuroMed conference there on June 3 and 4.

Other plans to meet with his German counterpart, Klaus Kinkel, had not worked out because of scheduling problems, but "I think [Palermo] will be possible," he said.

Mr. Kinkel had previously also mentioned Palermo as a possible venue for a reconciliation.

Mr. Cem said the row with Germany over Turkey's exclusion from European Union expansion was "mainly based on misunderstandings."

"It would be extremely illogical to have a dispute between Germany and Turkey because we have many mutual interests," Mr. Cem stressed.

"I have 2.5 million people that I have entrusted to Germany, and Germany is very important to me for that reason. Germany is entrusting 1.5 million people to me annually. Of course we will get along with Germany, and Germany

Turkish forces arrest 44 suspected Islamist rebels

ANKARA (R) — Security forces in southeast Turkey have detained 44 people believed to be members of the armed Islamist group Hizbullah, the Anatolia news agency said on Tuesday.

It said the arrests took place in villages in the province of Mus, where arms and Islamist documents and magazines

were also found. The agency did not say when the arrests were made.

Turkish security forces in Hizbullah responsible for number of killings and attacks in the southeast over many years. The group is not thought to be connected to the pro-Iran Lebanese group of the same name.

Politicians hail new spirit ushered in by King's meeting

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the radicalisation of the so-far peaceful opposition to government policies and wants to include them in the decision-making process.

The deadlock in the peace process and Mr. Netanyahu's policies have strengthened the arguments of those who oppose normalisation with Israel.

The opposition is maintaining that the government has tightened the screws on already strict legislations pertaining to public freedoms in order to hush its critics.

"The ceiling of democracy is lowering day after day, and the people are very worried. There is a dire need for a national reconciliation and serious dialogue, so that things can move on before grave actions are taken by some," Dr. Arabyat said.

Jordan's reputation as a country with an exemplary record of peaceful co-existence with its

opponents — Islamists and leftists — was dented last November, when the Islamists-led opposition boycotted the general elections in protest against what they termed as "a steady erosion of parliamentary authority."

The opposition has rejected a series of government measures targeted against the press, which has led a 10 human rights group to place Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on a list of the world's top 10 enemies of the press.

"The [political] atmosphere has been poisoned by angry policies and tight regulations," said Hani Hourani, director of Al Urdun Al Jadid Centre, an independent institute specialised in democracy studies. "There is hope that His Majesty's meeting with our leaders is sign of a fresh start to restore confidence between the people and the government, not just an isolated step."

Israel discusses Lebanon pullout offer with Russian envoy

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Russian envoy Viktor Posuvalyuk held talks Tuesday on the Jewish state's offer to pull out of south Lebanon, the defence ministry said in a statement.

"Mordechai and Posuvalyuk focused on Israel's pro-

posal to implement, with adequate security measures, U.N. Resolution 425 calling for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon," the statement said.

Mr. Mordechai asked Mr. Posuvalyuk to give Syria a message that Israel is unequivocally ready to

engage in peace talks with it," the statement said.

The defence minister also told Mr. Posuvalyuk that Israel is worried about Russian technology transfers to Iran, especially transfers of long-range ballistic missiles and non-conventional weapons, the ministry said.

U.N. postpones operations into Sudan's Nuba region

NAIROBI (AFP) — The United Nations has suspended operations to send food to Sudan's famine-ravaged Nuba region to give it time to work out logistics for an airlift, a U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) source said on Tuesday.

The source, who requested anonymity, said the postponement of the operations, due to last up to two weeks, would enable the United Nations to ensure that the relief supplies reached their intended locations and people, currently facing severe famine.

On May 9, Sudan announced that it would allow the shipment of humanitarian aid to the central Nuba Mountains region

after a meeting in Khartoum between Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Khartoum closed off the mountains to international aid agencies in 1989 when the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which started fighting the government in the south in 1983, extended the war to the Nuba territory in the central Southern Kordofan state in 1984.

The first relief food in nine years from the outside world reached the destitute people of the now rebel-held mountains when a Norwegian People's Aid consignment

of cereals was flown in on Friday.

The local people ate their food with a pinch of ash because the nine-year blockade enforced by the government had meant that not even salt was available to them.

A team of U.N. observers is expected to fly into Nuba Mountains on Wednesday to assess the humanitarian needs in the poverty-stricken Nuba villages in SPLA-controlled areas, where an estimated 20,000 people are threatened with starvation.

The Nuba people are a collection of 50 African tribes with more than 10 distinct language groups.

saying they would spare all sides hassles every six months and allow for longer-term infrastructure repairs.

But they said Iraq's objections, mainly on the tighter U.N. control envisioned under the American proposals, would need to be considered or the programme would not run at all.

Under the U.S. suggestions, Secretary-General Kofi Annan could initiate changes in the

U.S. wants Iraq food plan renewed automatically

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programme after consultations with Iraq. That would give him more power to control the programme.

Currently, Iraq draws up a distribution plan, and Mr. Annan and his staff make changes in discussions with Baghdad.

The Security Council voted in February to raise the amount of oil Iraq could sell to \$5.25 billion from \$2 billion over six months in an effort to offset the damaging effect of eight-year-old sanctions on the

Iraqi people. The sanctions were imposed in August 1990 after Baghdad's troops invaded Kuwait.

The \$5.25 billion plan is to take effect on June 4 — providing Mr. Annan has approved a plan on how the food, medicine and other humanitarian goods should be distributed.

The \$5.25 billion in oil sales is more than Iraq can handle, given the dilapidated state of its oil industry. But in dispute are what kind of goods, or

infrastructure repairs should be permitted under the distribution plan.

To that end, the U.S. envoy have gone to Portugal, Sweden and Slovenia, European non-permanent Security Council members, to discuss the proposal. Portugal and Sweden, diplomats said, feared the way Washington was devising its proposals assumed they would backfire and that many of the goods could be achieved under the current system.

Mr. Annan said he would allow humanitarian aid to be sent to the Nuba region.

He said the U.N. would allow humanitarian aid to be sent to the Nuba region.

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JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO
15:10 Mr. Bogus Show
15:30 Castle of Adventure
16:00 The Album Show
17:00 Ushuaia
18:00 Drama — Acapulco Bay
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Science Magazine
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Comedy — Buddies
20:00 Doc. — Envoyé Special
21:10 Kung Fu
22:00 News in English
22:30 Mini-series — Nutcracker
23:59 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:01 Fajr
05:31 (Sunrise) Duha
12:32 Dhuhur
16:13 'Asr
19:33 Maghreb
21:03 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel.
4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
4622366
Anglican Church Tel.
4624853/4624811.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 464138
Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

with a chance of scattered showers in the northern parts of the Kingdom, and winds northerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, it will be fine, winds northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman 12/24
Aqaba 20/31
Deserts 11/27
Jordan Valley 18/30

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 23, Aqaba 30
Humidity readings: Amman 47 per cent, Aqaba 50 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Mukhlis Halaseh 5519220
Dr. Rabi Sukkar 5856457
Dr. Fadi Khalil 5865456
Dr. Mohammad Lubadeh 5167914
Firas pharmacy 5661912
Al Asana pharmacy 4637055
Al Salam pharmacy 4636730
Yacoub pharmacy 4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 4623672
Najih pharmacy 5347632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qana 281484
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Rabah Al Bourini 990312
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade 4647101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic, Abdul 5660137
Husein Medical Centre Tel. 5856856
Luzmih 4630195
Khalidi Maternity 4644281/6
Akhleh Maternity 4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5669131
University Hospital 5353444
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50
Amal Hospital 5674155

ZARQA:
Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 815615

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 44(53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights
07:30 Damascus (RJ)
09:30 Jeddah (RJ)
09:45 Larnaca (RJ)
09:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
15:35 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:00 Paris (RJ)

18:05 Istanbul (RJ)
18:40 London, Brussels (RJ)
19:05 Rome (RJ)
19:20 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:25 Frankfurt, Berlin (RJ)
00:15 Beirut (RJ)
01:00 Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights

10:30 Cairo (MS)
11:00 Sanaa, Hudaidah (TY)
11:30 Kuwait (KU)
12:30 Jeddah (SV)
14:10 Tunis (TU)
14:10 Bahrain (GF)
15:05 Vienna (OS)
16:30 Algiers (AH)
18:35 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
19:05 Frankfurt (LH)
21:10 Beirut (ME)
23:20 Istanbul (TK)
23:20 Amsterdam (KL)
23:45 Athens, Beirut (OA)
00:15 London (BA)

Royal Wings (RW)
10:20 Amman (QAIA)
(Then proceeds to Marka Airport) (RW)
19:20 Tel Aviv (QAIA) (RW)
23:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

06:30 Larnaca (RJ)
08:50 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

10:50 Rome (RJ)
12:25 Paris, London (RJ)
12:45 Istanbul (RJ)
20:10 Colombo (RJ)
20:35 Beirut (RJ)
21:00 New Delhi (RJ)
21:10 Cairo (RJ)
21:10 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
21:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:20 Bombay (RJ)
21:25 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
22:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
02:00 Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights

06:35 Larnaca (CY)
07:30 Paris (AF)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
09:20 London (BA)
11:30 Cairo (MS)
11:30 Ta'iz, Sanaa (TY)
12:45 Kuwait (KU)
14:00 Jeddah (SV)
15:00 Bahrain, Muscat (GF)
15:10 Tunis (TU)
15:30 Vienna (OS)
17:20 Sharjah (AH)
20:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
00:40 Damascus, Amsterdam (OA)
04:00 Beirut, Athens (OA)

Home

Prince Rashid

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Prince Rashid Bin Al Hassan today celebrates his 19th birthday.

Prince Rashid, the son of the late King Hussein of Jordan, is the youngest of the late King's four sons and is currently studying at the American University in Washington, D.C.

Red Cross mark 50th

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Red Cross Society (JNRC) celebrated its 50th anniversary today.

The JNRC was founded in 1942 and has since then been working for the relief and welfare of the Jordanian people.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince praises new team

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan has praised the new team of ministers appointed by the King.

He said the new team is well qualified to carry out its duties and to serve the people of Jordan.

what's going on

FLIGHTS

06:30 Larnaca (CY)
07:30 Paris (AF)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
09:20 London (BA)
11:30 Cairo (MS)
11:30 Ta'iz, Sanaa (TY)
12:45 Kuwait (KU)
14:00 Jeddah (SV)
15:00 Bahrain, Muscat (GF)
15:10 Tunis (TU)
15:30 Vienna (OS)
17:20 Sharjah (AH)
20:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
00:40 Damascus, Amsterdam (OA)
04:00 Beirut, Athens (OA)

Prince Rashid celebrates 19th birthday

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Prince Rashid Ben Al Hassan today celebrates his 19th birthday.

Prince Rashid, the son of Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath, received his elementary education at the Baccalaureate School in Amman. He

pursued his secondary education at Harrow, obtaining eight GCSEs at ordinary levels and passing examinations in history, political science, classical civilisation and Arabic.

Prince Rashid has taken part in several military training courses in the Jordan Armed Forces, includ-

ing obtaining his paratroopers wings.

A Royal Decree was issued on Tuesday appointing Prince Rashid, who graduated from the Royal Academy of Sandhurst at Cambridge University in November 1997, as a second lieutenant in the Jordan Armed Forces.



Red Crescent society plans ceremony to mark 50th anniversary in September

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) will celebrate its golden anniversary in September at a ceremony to be held under Royal patronage, according to Mohammad Hadid, JNRCS president.

Dr. Hadid said the JNRCS will present His Majesty King Hussein, the society's honorary president, with its medal in recognition of his endeavours in humanitarian affairs, support for measures to guarantee human rights and human dignity and laying the foundation of democracy in Jordan.

At the ceremony, numerous Jordanian and international personalities who have contributed to the society's services will be presented with golden, silver and

bronze medals, according to Dr. Hadid.

Referring to JNRCS operations, Dr. Hadid said that over the past 50 years, the society has established a 125-bed hospital financed by world governments and Red Crescent and Red Cross organisations.

The hospital has four operation theatres, X-ray units, laboratories, and 24-hour outpatient emergency departments.

In addition to the hospital, the JNRCS runs a vocational training centre for poor women offering them free of charge training in secretarial work, computer skills, handicrafts and dressmaking. Dr. Hadid said the vocational courses accommodate 400 trainees annually.

The society has 12 branches in Jordan

providing free medical services financed by donor nations and organisations, he added.

Dr. Hadid noted that in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the society runs programmes to explain international humanitarian law. A special national committee has been set up to implement the law, he said.

Dr. Hadid also pointed out that the JNRCS, which during the 1990 Gulf crisis provided humanitarian services to hundreds of thousands of refugees who converged on the Kingdom, continues to search for missing Jordanians and other nationals and continues its humanitarian services to the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation.

Seminar seeks to examine 100 years of struggle over Palestine

AMMAN (J.T.) — Recounting the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, speakers at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation yesterday traced the struggle over Palestine to the inception of Zionism 100 years ago.

Prominent speakers from Jordan, Egypt and Palestine attending the symposium marking 100 years of the conflict and 50 years since the Palestinian nakbeh (catastrophe) discussed the role of the Zionist movement in the creation of Israel and the struggle with the Arab World as well as the ensuing peace accords beginning with Camp David and extending to the post-Oslo period.

One speaker, Abdul Wahab Massini, who has been working on an encyclopedia of Zionism for the past 15 years, stood out from the rest by offering a fresh interpretation of the origins of the movement and a solution to the conflict.

Dr. Massini, refuting the traditional Jewish explanation of the creation of the Zionist movement, which portrays the birth of the ideology as a natural culmination of the Jewish people's common struggle, said Zionism is part and parcel of the history of Western civilisation.

Many of the participants disagreed with Dr. Massini's

analysis, disassociating Judaism from Zionism, saying they were one and the same.

But for there to be peace, Dr. Massini said, Israel must shed its Zionist ideology.

"We cannot expect any peace within the Zionist framework of injustice, intimidation and aggression," Dr. Massini, a prominent Egyptian thinker, said. "We can move towards peace by removing the Zionist ideology from the state of Israel."

He stressed that stripping away this ideology "does not mean annihilating or destroying Israel or abolishing the Jewish or Israeli identity."

Instead, he asserted, it means the creation of a "legal, moral and political framework" that will remove the causes of tension and confrontation in the region.

In order to reach this goal, Dr. Massini said, both Israelis and Palestinians must fulfil certain requirements that would lead to a multi-ethnic, multi-religious state.

Israel should repeal the law of the "right of return," which allows any Jew in the world to come to Israel and obtain citizenship, halt settlement activity and accept all U.N. resolutions pertaining to the conflict, and allow Palestinians the right of return, said Dr. Massini.

For their part, the Palesti-

ans should announce that all Jews who were born or grew up in Palestine are citizens of the "new" state.

Ziad Abu Amr, member of the Palestine National Council (PNC) and professor at Bir Zeit University, noted that since the 1978 Camp David Accords, which ended the state of war between Egypt and Israel, several significant features of the conflict have emerged.

Prominent among these is the absence of the military option for the Arab World. One of the main outcomes of the 1973 war, he explained, was the growing conviction in the Arab World that Israel could not be defeated militarily.

"It is clear that returning to the military option has become more difficult since the signing of the bilateral peace accords," Dr. Abu Amr told the audience of professors, politicians and journalists.

Until the Camp David accords, the Arabs shared a common view of the resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, he said. But since the accords, there has been a marked lack of consensus both within the Palestinian community and the Arab World on the nature of the conflict and their option for addressing it.

"[In] commemorating 50 years since the Palestinian nakbeh... there must be a

review of the past half century of the struggle... and rearticulating the Arab position towards Israel and Zionism in light of the past experience," said Dr. Abu Amr.

According to Ali Jarbawi from Bir Zeit University, the 1993 Oslo peace accords between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel were a "significant political mistake" since they "fragmented the Palestinian cause."

In the Oslo accords, the PLO gave Israel an equal role in deciding the fate of the Palestinians, said Dr. Jarbawi.

"The Oslo understanding transformed the Palestinian cause from a struggle with international dimensions, under international law, to a bilateral local struggle negotiated between the two directly concerned parties," said Dr. Jarbawi.

The seminar, which opened yesterday, brings together former officials and a number of leading scholars. Topics for today and tomorrow include the dangers of the Israeli military and nuclear capabilities for the Arab regional order, the political, cultural and economic dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict, international law in the conflict, the water dispute, and lessons of the struggle and future challenges.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince praises taekwondo team

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan has congratulated the national Jordanian taekwondo team on their performance in the Third Asian Taekwondo Championship, which took place in Vietnam recently. In his cable to the team, Prince Hassan voiced appreciation of the individual members' efforts, saying that Jordan took pride in their achievement. The men won third place, while the women took ninth place and both bronze medals.

22-year-old woman killed in murder-suicide

YAJOUZ (J.T.) — A 25-year-old man Tuesday opened fire on a 22-year-old female student from the Intermediate University College in Yajouz, near Amman, killing her instantly. The man then killed himself. Eyewitnesses said the man had asked for the woman's hand in marriage but her family turned him down.

RJ allows amateurs to use flight simulator

AMMAN (J.T.) — Royal Jordanian (RJ) Tuesday said it will allow amateur aviators to conduct flight simulations at the Queen Alia International and Marka airports, according to the RJ deputy director general for training, Hassan Matar. The RJ decision aims to allow Jordanian and non-Jordanian amateurs to practise take-offs, landings, and communicating with towers and satellite stations, he said.



FORMER PILOT RETURNS TO SKIES: Mohammad Ato'ut, a former pilot in the Royal Jordanian Air Force (RJAF) who was disabled in a plane accident in 1995, Tuesday gets ready to fly an RJAF training plane in implementation of an order by His Majesty King Hussein (Petra photo)

Joint Jordanian-British mapping project in Aqaba region completed

AMMAN (J.T.) — British Ambassador Christopher Battiscombe was briefed Tuesday by Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) Assistant Director for Technical Affairs Mohammad Balgar oo how the ARA made use of the information provided from the recently completed "Thematic Mapping Project," according to a British embassy press release.

The project, a cooperative one between the Natural Resources Authority and the British Geological Survey and financed by the British government's Department for International Development, was established to provide planning authorities

and developers with up-to-date information on the natural environment to help them make informed decisions on the development of any region and its natural resources on the basis of accurate and scientific data, the statement said.

Examples of the way the maps and information can be of use to planners include guidance on the most suitable land for construction, most suitable locations for quarries and the establishment of protection zones around water wells.

The project focuses on the greater Aqaba area in south Jordan as a trial which could be extended to other parts of

the country. The project has established computer-based geographic information systems and supporting databases that can be accessed by various sectors of the community, the announcement added.

The greater Aqaba region has environmental concerns because the coastal development zone includes tourist sites as well as industrial and port complexes in close proximity to each other. The methodologies and techniques developed during the project could be applied to other environmentally sensitive areas in Jordan, including Amman, it concluded.

By Dima Hamdan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government on Tuesday approved amendments to legislation covering civil service operations to help raise the efficiency of the over 125,000 state employees and fight incompetence plaguing public departments.

Minister of Administrative Development Bassam Emoush told the Jordan Times that the changes would also ensure the rights of many of the employees, including if they willingly decide to retire early or are asked to do so by the minister.

Under the current system, any employee who decides to retire early or is pushed to leave does not get a pension.

"If the minister asks him/her to leave, then the employee will still be paid 50 per cent of his/her salary. But if he/she requests retirement, then they will not get any compensation," said Dr. Emoush, an Islamist reformer who took over the post in a government reshuffle in March.

Other amendments included reducing the probationary period from five years to a maximum of three before any civil employee is formally appointed to the job and promoting an employee after a maximum of eight years instead of 15 provided

there is a vacancy to fill.

The changes also stripped the prime minister of the right to terminate the employment of staff on government contract.

"These used to be exceptional cases that will not exist anymore and every employee on a government contract will follow the law governing the Social Security Corporation instead of the state law dealing with retirement," Dr. Emoush said.

He said temporary employees hired for a specific project should quit once it is over "in order to prevent an accumulation of staff in the government apparatus."

Dr. Emoush said a national seminar will be held soon to discuss plans for a two-day weekend for government employees instead of the current one day before a final decision is made.

According to a poll commissioned by his ministry, over 75 per cent of state employees said they were in favour of taking a two-day vacation on Thursday and Friday in return for working one extra hour during normal weekdays.

Friday is currently the national weekend.

The study sparked a national controversy with opposition coming from the private sector and the Chamber of Industry on the grounds that Jordan would lose four days of contact

with the West, which takes Saturday and Sunday off.

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, directing economic reforms launched in 1989, have long demanded that Jordan's civil service be trimmed to help reduce the budget deficit and improve government performance.

But successive governments have shunned the politically-sensitive proposals fearing they would lead to popular discontent in a country facing soaring poverty and unemployment.

Dr. Emoush has been pushing for the merger of ministries to trim the overall number from around 25 to 18 as part of efforts to cut state spending and raise the efficiency of the public sector.

He said incompetence resulted mainly from local concerns over unemployment and lack of objectivity in employing civil servants.

"The nature of our society sometimes compels us to take decisions based on humanitarian aspects rather than logical reasons," Dr. Emoush said.

"Now, with the new economic reforms and privatisation, we expect to see a solution coming from private investments."

He said the government was trying hard to limit to a minimum any new appointments in state posts.

The opposition has long accused many government officials and deputies of exercising nepotism and favouritism and of employing staff from their hometowns to exercise their power of patronage.

Dr. Emoush said his ministry had proposed to supervise the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Control and Inspection Department (CID), instead of the prime minister.

"It is not a battle for control, but we are seeking to formulate a comprehensive administrative apparatus."

The CSC receives applications for all government posts and devises plans to improve the performance of government staff, while the CID ensures that government departments adhere to their budgets and that their staff carry out their jobs properly.

Dr. Emoush said His Majesty King Hussein had approved a request by his ministry to award prizes for administrative excellence.

"We can't talk about administrative development by merely demanding that employees improve themselves. We must offer incentives. This is how the idea of the prize was born," he said.

Dr. Emoush said technical details of the prize, including its criteria, eligible candidates and its nature, were still being discussed.

what's going on

FILMS
• "Portrait of an Artist" (about Mexican artist Frida Kahlo) at Darat Al Funun, Jafal Wehdeh on Thursday, May 21, at 6:00 p.m.
• Children's film "The Little Prince" at the British Council, Jafal Amman at 6:00 p.m.
• Spanish film "La casa de Bernarda Alba" at Instituto Cervantes, Jafal Amman on Thursday, May 21, at 5:00 p.m.
• "Steel Magnolias" at the American Center, Amman, on Thursday, May 21, at 5:00 p.m.

ART SALE
• Sale of personal oil paintings of artist Mohammad Al Hadidi (at his residence), Dahiya Al Rashid, near Dawahi Hotel (Tel. 5154567).

CONCERT
• Concert by Rula Tahlouni at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. (daily until May 21).

BOOK SALE
• One-day sale of English language books for teachers and students at the American Center, Amman, at 4:00-7:00 p.m.

THE FIRST UNIVERSITIES THEATRE FESTIVAL
• Ceremony marking the end of the festival at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m.

ENGLISH ENCOUNTERS
• "The Role of Multiple Intelligence: Linguistics, mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, and naturalistic" at the American Center, Amman at 5:00-7:00 p.m.

LECTURE
• "A New Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ)" by Mr. Gary Grappo, chief secretary and chief commercial officer from the U.S. embassy, at the Radisson SAS Hotel at 1:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS
• Works by Christian de Portzamparc at the University of Jordan, until June 4.

• Works by Mohammad Al Lahham at Al Madinat Gallery, Ras Al 'Ain (Tel. 743158), until May 23.

• Paintings by Abdul Aziz Al Hassak at Hammamouni Art Gallery, Gardens St. (Tel. 5536098), until May 26.

• Spring collection of ceramic items and rugs at Beit Al Bawadi showroom, Amman (Tel. 5925841/5930070), until May 24.

• Photo exhibition "Frederico Garcia Lorca" and book exhibition "Lorca Translated Into Arabic" at Instituto Cervantes, Jafal Amman (Tel. 4610858), until May 25.

Religious leaders, sociologists examine issue of raising legal marriage age

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Religious leaders and sociologists joined Jordanian women activists on Tuesday in a nationwide campaign to raise the legal age of marriage to 18 to ensure solid families.

Current legislation allows females to marry at the age of 15 and men at 16, one factor sociologists have blamed for rising divorce rates.

Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Izzeddin Khatib Tamimi asked the participants of a two-day workshop on "Marriage Age" to conduct a balanced dialogue to come up with a just conclusion "and to stay away from extremism in order to serve citizens, families and our nation."

Sheikh Tamimi, who is also His Majesty King Hussein's advisor on religious affairs, told the participants that he "was not excited about the idea of specifying a legal marriage age."

Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) President Amnah Zou'bi said the rapid changes at the social level "did not get the needed change in our Arab laws."

"That is why we are targeting this issue, because it is the basis of building a healthy family and building a healthy society," Ms. Zou'bi stated.

Ms. Zou'bi pointed out that the campaign saw the light of day because of the support of several national and international organisations such as the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF), the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW), intellectuals and columnists.

In his address, FNF Regional Representative for Jordan and Lebanon Ulrich Vogt said "opening a dialogue on such a sensitive issue is, in my point of view, a real opportunity."

"Such experiences will also enrich experiences of the European civil society, and our role is to link the communication between the civil European and Arab societies," he added.

Supporters of the proposal have pointed out that since 18 is considered the minimum age of the exercise of most political and civil rights, such as voting, the same criterion should be applied to marriage.

Furthermore, doctors and social

workers warn that early marriages could also make birth spacing, the first government-promoted method for containing Jordan's high growth population rate, less effective.

During Tuesday's session, experts in this field presented five working papers tackling the issue. Sharia (Islamic law) Judge Samer Qubaj, who presented a paper entitled "Marriage Age and the Application at Sharia Courts," stressed that it is a social issue rather than a legal issue.

"The civil law is clear about the marriage age, but we still see contradictions in applying the law. I have encountered many cases in which women came to me claiming they were forced into marrying at an early stage," Judge Qubaj stated.

He concluded his paper by suggesting that participants should "focus on awareness, advice and guidance" as much as on changing the law.

In his paper, "Islam's Position on Early Marriages," University of Jordan Sharia Professor Mahmoud Sartawi said that in order to ensure a solid family and fewer divorces, "we should adopt the

Hanafi sect's teachings, which state that the age of marriage should be 18 for males and 17 for females."

"Young couples will not be able to handle their families properly, and that is why we are witnessing many divorces among couples of young age, in addition to the health dangers young women encounter during their pregnancies," Dr. Sartawi said.

Nawal Faouri, who was the first woman to be elected to the Shura Council of the Islamic Action Front, echoed Dr. Sartawi's views in her paper, entitled "Early Marriages: Yesterday and Today," saying that "we should resort to dialogue and a clear understanding of our Islamic religion."

Sociologist Hilmi Sari pointed out the dangers females encounter if they are married at an early age, describing it as "rape of women's awareness and knowledge."

"If women are married at an early age, they will be deprived of education. The result is that these women will pass on their ignorance to their children, and this will allow their husbands to manipulate their destiny and status, which results in divorce," Dr.

Sari said.

Attorney Mazen Ersheidat criticised the Civil Law, stating that the "legislation concerning marriage age is a violation of human rights and the international conventions on human rights."

"Jordanian civil law stipulates that the marriage age is different than the age of puberty, and this in itself is a violation of human rights conventions, which state that the age of puberty and marriage are the same," Atty. Ersheidat said.

Recent reports have indicated that early marriages are among the leading causes of divorce. The reports stated that 86 per cent of divorces occur among couples who married before reaching the age of 21.

During today's session, the participants will discuss a paper entitled "The Negative Health Effects of Early Marriages" and will listen to testimonies of individuals who were married or were forced into marriage at an early age.

The recommendations of the seminar will be referred to the JNCW, which will formulate an official proposal to the government.

Thailand joint mil

David Kendall, Mr. Clinton's attorney, told the Post that McDougal's accusation that the president lied is false. "There's no point in responding to each of the other scurrilous falsehoods in McDougal's

book, however much they may hype sales," Mr. Kendall is quoted as say-

...more than
...in prison, was
...death in March
...being killed a
...a hold-up in
...Huntsville, T
...ing a tax
...French fries
...and chocolate
...“I’m going
...place.” were
...according to
...Larry Finner

Second time in a row, Texas has expected to be sentenced to serve the common-law.

Thailand, U.S. begin joint military exercise

BANGKOK (AFP) — Some 17,000 Thai and United States troops began annual wargames here Tuesday, despite severe budgetary constraints which have bitten deep into Thailand's military machine.

The launch of the exercise, codenamed "Cobra Gold", in Thailand's western Kanchanaburi province was attended by Thai supreme commander General Amponpisit and U.S. Ambassador William Itoh.

"As in the past, we still face challenges, today those arising in time of budget cuts and regional economic uncertainty," Mr. Itoh said in a speech at the launch ceremony.

Thailand said earlier it could only shoulder one fifth of the cost of the exercise, or 21 million baht (\$550,000) due to the economic crisis which has slashed by a about quarter.

The Thai military recently admitted to heavy overspending during the decade-long economic boom, and has cancelled several major weapons purchases, including a squadron of U.S.-built F/A-18 fighter jets.

Some 10,600 U.S. troops and 6,250 Thai soldiers, along aircraft and ships will, train here until June 1, in what U.S. officials have said is one of the largest exercises involving American forces anywhere in the world.

The annual wargames have been held here each year since 1982, except in 1993, when Washington protested against a bloody crackdown on student democracy protests the previous year.

El Niño brings chaos to Himalayan climbers

KATHMANDU (AFP) — The El Niño climatic effect, which has blazed an apocalyptic trail of drought, forest fires and severe floods across the globe, is now being blamed for Himalayan avalanches that swept six climbers to their deaths.

Nepal's mountains are traditionally packed in spring as mountaineers try to conquer some of the world's most fearsome peaks.

But this year, pre-monsoon rains whipped up by El Niño have brought unusually low temperatures, high winds, deadly blizzards, poor visibility and sudden avalanches.

Many climbers have had their plans disrupted — expeditions to the world's tallest peak, the 8,848-metre-high Mount Everest, have been particularly badly hit.

Even without the El Niño effect, sudden changes in conditions and murderous winds can cause havoc in the range where, two years ago this month, 12 climbers were killed on Everest.

El Niño, which occurs every three or so years, involves a warming of the upper Pacific Ocean, altering climatic conditions around the world, causing drought in Asia and extreme flooding in the Americas.

The latest climbing deaths in Nepal came to light Monday. Two Japanese climbers were killed and three suffered severe frostbite after scaling the world's third tallest summit, Mount Kanchanjunga.

Nepal's Tourism Ministry said Atsushi Shiina, 28, and Kenzo Akasaka, 30, died last Friday while descending with eight other Japanese climbers from the summit of the 8,586-metre Kanchanjunga.

Three who suffered severe frostbite were taken down by helicopters.

The bad weather stopped a rescue helicopter landing to pick up 31-year-old team leader Taro Tanigawa, Masakazu Okuda, 32, and Kenta Hirose, 28. They were eventually flown back to Kathmandu from the basecamp.

The first climbing deaths of the year in Nepal occurred on April 25 when a sherpa was swept away by an avalanche on 8,091-metre-high Mount Annapurna.

On May 1, Papandreou Nikos, 44, a Greek businessman slipped 1,500 metres to his death on Mount Dhaulagiri.

French mountaineer Chantal Mauduit and a top Nepalese sherpa, Ang Tshering, were also killed on Mount Dhaulagiri. Their bodies were found at the weekend.

Dhaulagiri is considered a killer peak — technically difficult to scale and avalanche prone — and has claimed the lives of more than 32 climbers from different nations.

Four teams are currently attempting to climb Everest via the southeast ridge route. Two are from the U.S. and the others are from Norway and Singapore.

They have been held back for nearly two weeks due to bad weather, a tourism ministry official said.

But after a slight improvement in conditions Sunday the teams started to inch their way to the summit.

Among the climbers is Tom Whitaker, a 49-year-old professor from Arizona who lost a right leg in a car accident.

It will be Whitaker's third attempt to conquer Everest. In 1995 he reached 27,500 feet on the North Ridge but could not make it to the top. His first attempt was in 1991.

The bad weather conditions have struck over a dozen other expeditions heading for various peaks and many have been forced to abandon their attempts.



This oil on canvas portrait, 'Napoleon at Fontainebleau', is part of an array of property relating to the military career of Napoleon Bonaparte that were to be offered for sale by Christie's auction house in New York May 19. The portrait is from the workshop of Paul Delaroche and was estimated to fetch between \$20,000 and \$30,000 (Reuters photo)

Childhood obesity, high blood pressure linked to adult problems

WASHINGTON (AFP) — High blood pressure or obesity in children, especially boys, can lead to life-threatening problems in adulthood, say two studies in the latest edition of the Journal of the American Heart Association.

One study says that adolescents with high blood pressure risk developing a thickening of the heart walls called left ventricular hypertrophy.

In adults, left ventricular hypertrophy is a risk factor for a heart attack, heart failure and stroke, according to the study.

The other study concludes that about 10 per cent of young people with high blood pressure develop left ventricular hypertrophy. The problem is more common among boys than girls and it affects obese adolescents of both sexes.

Stephen Daniels of Children's Hospital Medical Centre in Cincinnati, Ohio, one of the study's authors, recommends that doctors begin monitoring patients' blood pressures at age three and that young people at risk undergo regular echocardiograms.

Prince Ranariddh endorses election boycott

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Deposed Cambodian co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh returned to Cambodia Tuesday endorsing a decision by his opposition alliance to boycott elections if they are held as scheduled on July 26.

"I think our statement is very clear already," the prince told reporters in brief comments before he was hustled into his car by bodyguards.

The four party opposition alliance, the National United Front, announced Monday that it would not participate in the elections unless conditions designed to ensure a free and fair vote were met and the poll was delayed.

The prince, who returned from a brief trip to Thailand, made no other remarks.

There had been speculation that Prince Ranariddh might distance himself from the front, because of tensions between the group's members, especially between the prince and leading dissident Sam Rainsy.

Contributing to the speculation was the fact that the prince is president of the front but did not sign Monday's statement. Instead, he authorised the secretary general of his royalist FUNCINPEC party to do so.

However, aides to the prince said the only reason he had not signed the document was that he had been abroad.

Despite the fact that the front has vowed not to participate in the election if it is held on July 26, opposition officials said they would continue to urge their members to register to vote in the hopes that their demands would be met.

The month-long voter registration period began Monday amid complaints from Sam Rainsy that only supporters of powerful Second Prime Minister Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP) were being allowed to register.

"If this strategy continues, there is no chance of an election that is even remotely acceptable," he said.

The complaint could not be independently confirmed immediately and officials with the National Election Commission which is overseeing the registration, campaign and balloting, said they were unaware of it.

However, they said they would investigate if they received a formal complaint.

'Canadian forces are a haven for sexual harassment and rape'

OTTAWA (AFP) — The Canadian military is a haven for promiscuity, sexual harassment and even rape, according to a report in this week's Maclean's magazine.

The newsmagazine, which hits the newsstands Tuesday, carried out an investigation in which it identified 27 women who suffered sexual assault shortly after enlisting with the Canadian Forces.

The magazine concluded that "the cases ... reveal a culture — particularly in the navy and combat units — of unbridled promiscuity, where harassment is common, heavy drinking a way of life, and women ... are often little more than game for sexual predators."

Maclean's investigators said that more often than not, victims were the ones to be punished rather than the men who assaulted them.

The report probes the stories of 13 women who were assaulted.

One woman, it says, who was 18 years old at the time, was carried off during a party into another room guarded by other soldiers and raped.

Despite her pleas for help, nobody came to her assistance.

Even her brother, who was also in the military at the time, told her not to report the incident because it would harm both of their careers and damage their relations with other soldiers.

The chief opposition parliamentary spokesman on defence, Art Hanger, said he is demanding a report from the Department of National Defence on the scope of the problem.

Mr. Hanger, who has toured military bases across Canada, said: "On our tours, we certainly heard some women complain about sexual harassment and also sexual assault."

"I believe the sexual harassment incidents have increased dramatically."

Parachute rescue at sea under way

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A rescue team has parachuted from a U.S. Coast Guard plane into the Atlantic Ocean in a daring bid to save a critically ill seaman, officials said Monday.

The four-member team departed aboard a C-130 from Gabreski, New York, and flew five hours to the 30-metre-long Cam Civit, a Portuguese-flagged fishing boat 1,600 kilometres east of Bermuda, the New York Air National Guard said.

The C-130 arrived at the scene at about 01:45 GMT Tuesday, said Major Hadj Thomas of the New York Air National Guard's 102nd Rescue Squadron out of West Hampton Beach.

The team jumped into the sea near the fishing boat with a kit containing an inflatable Zodiac boat and were expected to reach the Cam Civit momentarily, Mr. Thomas told AFP by telephone.

Earlier, Major James Finkle, spokesman for the New York Air National Guard's 106th Rescue Wing, said the night jump was difficult because seas were running above nine feet with winds blowing about 25 knots.

Once the team is on board the Cam Civit, a flight surgeon on the C-130 will be in radio contact with the rescue team as they try to stabilise the stricken seaman, Maj. Finkle said.

Maj. Thomas said the victim was suffering from internal bleeding and internal injuries.

The rescue team planned to transfer the seaman to a merchant vessel in the area, which would be met by a Coast Guard helicopter some 323 kilometres from Bermuda. He would then be hoisted aboard the hovering helicopter and flown to a hospital on land, Mr. Finkle said.

Novelty seekers with sweet tooth alcoholism candidates

WASHINGTON (R) — Novelty seekers with sweet teeth may be prime candidates for alcoholism, according to research released Tuesday that authors said could pave the way for a highly accurate test for the debilitating disease.

"No other diagnostic test for alcoholism shows such results," Alexey Kampov-Polevoy, study leader and research fellow at the University of North Carolina, said in a news release.

The two-part test, a personality questionnaire and a "sweet test," accurately pegged alcoholism in 85 per cent of the 78 men tested, Mr. Kampov-Polevoy said.

But the promising formula, which could pave the way for an easy-to-administer test of the risk of developing alcoholism, has a quirk, said Mr. Kampov-Polevoy, who is with the University's Bowles Centre for Alcohol Studies in Chapel Hill.

The impulsive, dessert lovers in the study tested high for alcohol dependency only if they had a conflicting personality trait — a simultaneous need to avoid harm, he said.

"You might say that the sweet-loving alcoholic is a person who might love to sky dive but is afraid to go to the aeroplane," Mr. Kampov-Polevoy said.

Novelty seekers are impulsive, while danger dodgers suffer from depression and anxiety, he said.

"The combination of a preference for strong pleasurable stimuli (sweets) with impaired control of impulses puts that person in trouble," he said.

The team published its findings this week in a journal entitled "Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research".

The test sample included 52 men who had never been diagnosed as alcoholics and 26 who were recovering from the disease, the university said.

The school said its researchers completed related work in animals and humans.

In one study, 65 per cent of alcoholics given five sugar solutions preferred the most concentrated one, which was three times sweeter than regular cola, the university said.

Only 16 per cent of the nonalcoholics wanted the sweetest solution, the school said.

Texas executes man for murder

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A U.S. man convicted of murdering a store cashier as a teenager was executed Monday in Texas, prison officials said.

Robert Anthony Carter, 34, who spent more than half of his life in prison, was sentenced to death in March 1982 for having killed a cashier during a hold-up in Houston eight months earlier. He was 17.

It was the second time in a month that Texas has executed a man sentenced to death for a crime he committed while a minor.

He was executed at 6:25 p.m. local time (2325 GMT) by lethal injection in Huntsville, Texas, after eating a last meal of fish, French fries, orange juice and chocolate cake.

"I'm going to a better place," were his last words, according to prison official Larry Fitzgerald.

Last week, Amnesty International wrote to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to ask him to intervene on Carter's behalf when he met U.S. President Bill Clinton in Germany.

The human rights association stressed that the condemned man was physically ill and noted that putting to death young delinquents flies in the face of numerous international human rights conventions.

On April 22, Texas ignored calls for clemency from Pope John Paul II, among others, and executed Joseph Cannon, 38, for a murder committed when he was 17.

A third man in the same situation, Napoleon Beazley, now 21, is due to be executed May 26 for the murder of an adolescent.

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Meeting offers hope of renewal

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's move to engage the professional unions in a frank dialogue during a surprise visit to their headquarters Monday and the projected meeting today with the three branches of government are seen by many Jordanians as a genuine attempt by the Monarch to breathe new life into the country's body politic, restore relations between the government and opposition and ease the tension created by Israel's intransigence on the Palestinian front and by the stagnant economic conditions.

Jordanians from all walks of life hope to see the warm and cordial relations that always characterised ties between the government and opposition restored. They hope to see the King's criticism of the policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu translated by the government into the concrete action of putting pressure on Israel to pursue a genuine peace with the Palestinians. They would like to feel a real improvement in the domain of public freedoms, especially freedom of expression, the cornerstone of a functioning democracy.

The main characteristic of His Majesty the King's 45-year reign is his feel for public sentiment and his ability to always put fresh vigour into people and their institutions. The appointment recently of the respected Taher Hikmat to head the judiciary and effect the long sought-after reform of the judicial and court systems was a welcome development that is expected to restore to the judiciary the role that it should play in the building of an advanced democracy. His Majesty has been calling for the reform of the judiciary for years now. It has become equally clear that the country needs to establish a proper constitutional court that would act as the final authority on matters of contention between Parliament, the government and people.

What the three branches of government need to do at this stage of our political and democratic development is to reinvestigate the tools of democracy, engage in a constant and open dialogue and strengthen civil society institutions. The notion that the minority should respect and abide by the will of the majority needs to be engrained in the psyche of the individual and the political parties. Meanwhile, the majority should also uphold the minority's right to express its opinion peacefully and freely.

Jordanians look to the meeting that is being held today at the Royal Court with a great deal of anticipation and hope. They hope that under the wise guidance of the leadership, the men and women who are meeting with His Majesty today will take us to new horizons.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Aswat's Rasbid Hassan lauded the leaders of India for their success in protecting the country's democracy despite its burgeoning population and poverty and its success in safeguarding national unity. The writer praised the Indian leaders' determination to achieve progress and development for India and their success in the scientific and technological fields that enabled the country to acquire nuclear weapons to deter foreign aggression. Against all odds, the Indians have built their country and acquired weapons for deterring aggression despite the poverty that plagues many Indian regions, he continued. In contrast the Arab countries which possess vast oil wealth are unable even to possess the will and the determination to confront aggression and are unable to meet to discuss and adopt a national strategy to protect their legitimate rights.

Al Dustour's Mohammad Jayousi praised current Jordanian and Syrian efforts to build the Wabdan Dam on the Yarmouk River to harness its water for power generation and irrigation purposes. The writer said the project will secure 150 million cubic metres of water for Jordan annually and will provide Syria with electric power which it needs for its industry. It is true that the idea for the project is an old one, but the regional circumstances have prevented the construction of the dam in the past, he added. The writer said the time is ripe for building the dam now that the Syrians and the Jordanians are in dire need of water and energy for their development and need to work towards closer relations in the face of common challenges and dangers. Both Jordan and Syria, said the writer, have strong and hostile neighbours which have been betting on continued divisions among Arabs in order to weaken the nation.

Washington Watch

Why Clinton came to the Arab American leadership conference

ON MAY 7, 1998, President Bill Clinton addressed the Arab American Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. It was the first time a U.S. president had addressed an Arab American conference. For my institute (the Arab American Institute), the other co-sponsoring organisations, the more than 800 Arab Americans in attendance and the hundreds of thousands who watched the event live on C-SPAN and ANA-TV, it was a remarkable and historic moment. Although some critics may not have understood the significance of the event, for those of us who laboured long and hard in Arab American politics, its meaning was undeniable. Our community had arrived. As an organised constituency, Arab Americans are now recognised as full participants in the U.S. political system. This was not always so. It did not come easy. We had earned this recognition with a lot of hard work.

Just 30 years ago there was not an Arab American community to speak of. There were no national Arab American organisations and there was no unified community consciousness. There were some organisations, but they were mainly social Lebanese groupings or village and family-based associations. Individuals of Arab descent could and did become involved in U.S. politics but as individuals, without an ethnic (and certainly not an "Arab") identification. When Arab American organisations did come into existence, they experienced two some-what related difficulties. Because they largely based themselves on Arab issues, they did not attract to their membership the overwhelming majority of Americans of Arab descent. Additionally, they did not direct their attention or participate in the major arena of American politics-electoral activity.

Nevertheless these groups were vigorously attacked by the much larger and more powerful American Jewish organisations who saw Arab Americans as a potential threat. Because these Arab American groups were on the margins of U.S. politics, they were vulnerable to these attacks. During the past 20 years there has been a steady evolution of Arab American organising efforts from the margins of U.S. politics into the mainstream. But it was not an easy task.

When, in this early period, Arab American organisations attempted to join broader U.S. coalitions on foreign policy or civil rights concerns they were often excluded because of American Jewish pressure. I recall attempting to bring an organisation I formed in 1978 into the Washington-based Coalition for a New Foreign Policy. The members of the coalition voted overwhelmingly to include us. But we were ultimately rejected when three Jewish groups threatened to resign in protest if we were admitted. That same year, we were invited to join a coalition that was being formed by several U.S. ethnic organisations. Once again our inclusion was challenged by Jewish groups, who ended up forming the coalition without us.

Around that same time I was invited to the White House to an ethnic leadership meeting with Vice-President Walter Mondale. Three days after the meeting, a White House official called to inform me that I would not be invited back again because Jewish groups had complained that a "pro-Arab" group had been included. During this period, major Jewish groups published reports and issued warnings to the media and politicians on each and every Arab American organisation and leader. We were described as "terrorist supporters" and/or anti-Semites. Because some of these politicians and even some in the media took those warnings seriously, we found our path to full inclusion impeded. These same Jewish groups even published analyses of the "Arab American phenomenon." They denied the existence of an Arab American community as such and dismissed it as fiction created simply to wage an anti-Israel campaign. Although some progress was made during this period, grave difficulties remained.

Beginning in 1984, however, with Arab American involvement in both the Jesse Jackson presidential campaign and the Republican presidential campaign of Ronald Reagan things began to change for Arab Americans. Our AAI was founded in 1984 by Arab American Democrats and Republicans in order to further the process began in 1984 of bringing Arab Americans into mainstream U.S. politics. At first our efforts, while recording some successes, encountered serious challenges as well. Pressure continued to be applied to candidates to reject Arab American support and to exclude Arab Americans from political campaigns. For two years, for example, the Democratic party refused to meet with or recognise the newly formed Arab American

Democratic Federation. It was clear that as we sought to enter the mainstream, we would be perceived as even more threatening and the pressure to exclude us would intensify. But as Jesse Jackson reminded us in these early years, "The biggest threat you pose is not the threat to quit and walk away, but the threat to stay around and fight." And fight we did.

In 1986, AAI published a booklet called the "Politics of Exclusion." In this study we detailed how the campaigns of several politicians discriminated against Arab Americans: by rejecting our contributions, refusing our endorsements and attacking their opponents because Arab Americans were participating in or contributing to their campaigns. This booklet received significant press coverage. And in the years that followed, each and every time candidates treated our community in an undemocratic way, we protested publicly and received both press coverage and public support.

In the 1988 presidential campaign, Arab Americans made a real impact in both parties. We elected a record number of delegates in national and state party conventions. On the Democratic side, we succeeded in winning enough seats and supporters that in 10 state conventions we passed resolutions supporting Palestinian statehood and had the first ever debate on Palestinian rights at the National Democratic Convention in Atlanta. The nation's press was filled with articles about "Arab Americans Coming of Age in U.S. Politics" and some even attributed Jesse Jackson's victory in the Michigan primary elections, in part, to the Arab American vote. We continued to grow and develop: increasing Arab American voter registration, candidate support activity, and deepening Arab American involvement in the grass roots of both parties.

The phenomenon had become self-generating. Arab Americans across the country had begun quite spontaneously to organise and vote and became recognised. And the growth has continued. After initially experiencing some difficulty breaking into the Clinton campaign in 1992, Arab Americans fought back and gained access to the campaign. Arab Americans supported the campaign and were, in turn, supported in their efforts by the campaign. In many ways the Clinton White House has been extremely supportive of Arab American involvement.

While Arab American involvement at the 1993 White House signing ceremony and Vice President Gore's

... we have fused together most of the component parts of the Arab American community into a single constituency.

Builders for Peace are well known as the frequent Arab American White House and State Department meetings, other developments are less well known. When the White House and Democratic Party founded their ethnic councils, Arab Americans were not only included from the outset, we were also asked to serve as one of the three co-conveners of the groups. In addition, Arab Americans participated in the President's Initiative on Race and the White House Conference on Hate Crimes. Arab Americans were also a part of the Democratic Party's mobilising efforts on behalf of several of the President's important legislative initiatives: The budget proposal, health care reform and education reform. In 1996, Arab American involvement in the national electoral arena took a step forward when the Clinton-Gore presidential campaign formally launched, at a Washington press conference, the Arab Americans for Clinton-Gore Committee. In 1997 this committee was transformed into the Arab American Democratic Leadership Council (AADLC), a recognised part of the Democratic Party. Through all of this, Arab American activity in the political process continued to grow. Today, the Arab American vote in Michigan, for example, is a recognised political force. Across the United States Arab Americans are running for office and winning elections in record numbers. There are currently six Arab American members of Congress and one Arab American Senator.

This year a total of 14 Arab Americans are running for Congressional and Senate seats! In addition to the AADLC, there is an Arab American Republican group and an Arab American Leadership Council that now

includes almost 400 Arab American elected officials and party leaders. This number includes dozens of mayors, judges, state representatives and county party chairs. Our most important accomplishment, I believe, is that we have fused together most of the component parts of the Arab American community into a single constituency. We are, as I said in my May 7 introduction to the President's speech, immigrants and descendants of immigrants...we are a diverse people, about three million strong coming from all parts of the Arab World. We are part of the American success story. No longer does an individual of Arab descent who seeks to run for office run away from the Arab American community. The community supports those candidates and the candidates seek community support. We have formed a mutually beneficial relationship, which has given us strength and recognition. Other politicians now seek us out as well. Today, in most campaigns Arab American support is sought and welcomed. As the Arab American vote numbers increased and Arab Americans have become more active in politics, politicians who only a decade ago rejected our support now reach out for our endorsements. As one White House official described this turnaround "Politicians know how to count and now you count."

I recall an event in the middle of Israel's 1996 bombing campaign in Lebanon that made it clear to me how far we had developed. As always happens in the middle of a crisis situation the White House Office of Public Liaison called my office to see how the community was reacting to the bombing and what could be done to assist us. The National Security Council also called and organized a few meetings for our leadership with White House and State Department officials. The most intriguing call, however, came from a high level White House political official who asked "will this hurt us in Michigan?" The intent of his call was purely political. He wanted to know, would the White House lose Arab American voters in Michigan in the November 1996 elections? While some might dismiss the call as crass politics-in fact, politics is a crass game of numbers. This was the call Arab Americans had been working toward for 20 years! After working to register voters and organise their turnout, now, for the first time politicians were taking note of the Arab American vote in a key state that had to be won in order to win the White House. Inspired by that call, we worked with Michigan's large organised Lebanese community. They brought almost 3,000 Arab Americans to Washington to demonstrate their concern for Lebanon in front of the White House. Before the demonstration, the president's National Security Adviser met with us and the president agreed to four of the demands we made that day. Our message had been sent, and we were heard.

When some Arab reporters asked us how we got the President to come to our event, they expected, I believe, a short answer or some behind the scenes story of intrigue. Instead I gave them the narrative. I have just related of our 20 years of struggle. The President came, in part, because we had earned his recognition and respect, because we had worked hard and made our place in U.S. politics. Additionally, we have developed personal ties with White House officials and party leaders. The importance of those bonds of friendship can never be underestimated. It's like the lesson I learned from my father's grocery store. Customers will come to your business if you have the goods they want and if they like doing business with you. You have to have both the goods to sell and a personal relationship.

There are still huge challenges facing Arab Americans. The negative stereotypes our opponents created to discredit the Arab cause have now become public policy. FBI harassment, airport profiling and other forms of discrimination are issues that must be addressed in addition to the on-going struggle for a balanced Middle East policy. But the path to overcoming all these problems is the same path we have been following for the past two decades. A recent caller to my ANA radio program criticised our Vote '98 Conference saying that it attended only one session and left because, as he put it, "you were not discussing the important issues facing the Arab World." My response was simple "voting and participation in politics is the most important issue, because none of our other issues will be addressed until we are stronger as an American voting constituency. There is no shortcut. It is the only way for us to succeed."

Netanyahu harps on moot point

By George S. Hishmeh
 Special to the Jordan Times

WASHINGTON — Simply stated, Benjamin Netanyahu is unbelievable. He came to town after having snubbed the American president and then in the process of five days of public speaking at forums hosted by the American Jewish organisations, and cajoling congressional leaders as well, managed to turn the tables on the head of the docile U.S. government.

Moreover, despite some press reports to the contrary he actually took a more hardened position for reviving the Mideast peace negotiations, now in 14 months of limbo.

Despite this public slap in the face, the U.S. administration is still surprisingly biding back its counter-punch. In fact, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright scurried to the National Press Club here not to disclose the so-called American "ideas" which were apparently anathema to Netanyahu but to plead with the Israeli sympathisers that there was no ultimatum intended when she invited the Israeli leader, provided he accepted the American plan, to come to Washington for the launching of the final status talks. To her credit, she did maintain that the U.S. position will not be watered down.

How Netanyahu was able to turn around the argument with the Clinton administration was to highlight a moot point that found some resonance here, namely that Israel and Israel alone must determine its

security needs. This simplistic point that rallied some in the American Jewish community and others elsewhere in the country had a few detractors.

The United States failed to step forward and make its case, a silence that surprised many observers here, especially when Netanyahu's surrogates took to the podiums to denounce the Clinton administration.

In matter of fact Netanyahu's supporters must have forgotten that the U.S. was primarily involved in the day-to-day negotiations as a result of the Israeli leader's failure to maintain a working relationship with the Palestinian (National) Authority. Hence, the Hebron accords, full of American imprints.

Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen reminded Netanyahu's admirers here, of the identity of the decision-makers in Washington. He wrote: "At one time, whenever the United States gave Israel a hard time, Arabists within the State Department were blamed. These were foreign service officers who, either in myth or in fact, favoured the Arab cause over Israel..."

"Now, though, as countless readers of certain Arab newspapers can tell you, America's Middle East policy has fallen into the hands of Jews. Clinton is not one and neither is Al Gore, but below them policy is made by the strangest group of Arabists ever assembled. I am talking now of the national security adviser, Samuel Berger; the Middle East negotiator, Dennis Ross; his deputy, Aaron Miller; the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs,

Martin Indyk and — in the purple prose of some Arab newspapers — the secretary of state. She is of Jewish ancestry."

"No one can accuse these people of hostility toward Israel — or even indifference..."

In fact, another observation that skipped Cohen is that most of the American columnists who regularly write on the Middle East are Jewish — Tom Friedman, A.M. Rosenthal, William Safire, Charles Krauthammer and Stephen Rosenfeld to name a few; however, their views are not similar.

Netanyahu's first objection to the American "ideas" was said to be that the 13.1 per cent pullback from the West Bank threatened Israeli security, although many here could not see how an additional two per cent (he was said later to agree to an 11 per cent withdrawal) threatened Israel's "vital" interests, considering that a third withdrawal was in the cards.

It was Ariel Sharon, his right-wing minister, who revealed here earlier this month that the American position threatened Israel's water resources and denied the Israelis early-warning stations.

But this week Netanyahu raised the stakes further by saying that in his talks here he wanted "to know is there another redeployment after this one (the second redeployment), because we have a finite amount of area that we have designated for this process...that we know will not jeopardise our security..."

He added: "This is at least as serious an

issue for us as the second redeployment. We are looking at the entire redeployment process first, second, and most importantly, third."

In another glib reply, he said: The issue for us is not how many slices we have, but the total amount that we're slicing."

Netanyahu has, meanwhile, accepted the advice of some editorialists who told him not to cross swords with President Clinton, who remains popular among American Jews and in Israel. Accordingly, he referred to the dispute in his first public address as if "talking among friends around the dinner table."

There are some who believe that if President Clinton remains firm in his position, Netanyahu will succumb. But the United States cannot continue to turn the other cheek in its loud argument with the right-wing government in Israel at the expense of its significant strategic and economic interests in the Arab World, evidenced last week in the decision by the United Arab Emirates to purchase over \$7 billion worth of American fighter planes.

It is not unlikely that the United States may face another crucial showdown in the Gulf. For example, the United States will be discussing this week for the first time its effort for the establishment of a U.N. commission "to investigate charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Saddam Hussein regime." Whatever line it takes, the lingering Arab-Israeli conflict will once again cast its long shadow on the Gulf.

Feature

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Jordan h

The following is the text of an address that Ambassador to the U.S. Marwan Muasher made to the AIPAC, the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee, on Sunday.

I AM glad to have this opportunity to address this conference to outline the Jordanian approach to peace in the Middle East and the model of peace that we have adopted and are trying to advance.

Many developments have taken place since Madrid, resulting in the breaking down of many psychological barriers. One should not underestimate this fact because it is the first step towards true dialogue among the people of the area. The fact that the ambassador of Jordan is standing here today, the first Jordanian official to address an AIPAC conference, is an example of the progress we have covered in our quest to create a new Middle East that is at peace with itself.

I would also like to convey the position of a country which has demonstrated that its commitment to peace has endured and withstood all challenges since the process began in Madrid and particularly the signing of a treaty of friendship between Jordan and Israel. I would like to stress that the peace process has not been a one-way street. It has been a process of mutual understanding and respect between governments and the people of the region. Jordan is a country that has been a part of the peace process from the beginning. It has been a process of mutual understanding and respect between governments and the people of the region. Jordan is a country that has been a part of the peace process from the beginning.

When Jordan opted for peace, it was based on a strategic decision and the region of the politics of conflict and develop a new external environment of cooperation and independence with Israel and all the parties in the region as truly model that would ensure a lasting peace with Israel. I would like to stress that the peace process has not been a one-way street. It has been a process of mutual understanding and respect between governments and the people of the region. Jordan is a country that has been a part of the peace process from the beginning.

The framework is a peace process with references to cooperation and mutual respect, all areas of cooperation and a strong commitment to develop the Jordan Rift in a new outlook that sees — not as separating edges — a common interfaces. This peace provides tremendous opportunities for development for each of the countries and for the region as a whole.

Where to go

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By Richard Tanner

SING SOUTH-WEST from Amman road to the Dead Sea passes before descending into the Jordan Valley. Notice how much warmer it gets as you reach sea-level, and drier too. The dolmens on the rocky ridge at the foot of Mount Nebo on the right are all passed (LHS). Near the point where the roads bears left is Ghassul, the classic chalcolithic village occupied from 4600-3800 BC. Little can be seen on site but a 99-year-old wall painting has been found and hangs in the Amman Archaeological Museum. Al Qalaa is between the trees, shade for a picnic. Sparrows and camels for sale can turn right for the Dead Sea. House which provides changing rooms for the saltiest swim of your life and a little rain, the warm water of the Dead Sea 33 per cent saltier than around to your heart's content. You have cut, plaster your skin under a shade or refreshing water in the restaurant. If you fancy a little more exclusive, go to the Dead Sea Hotel, soon to be built by the Movenpick and then a where as well as floating and drinking, you can sample water therapy or notice that the point on Earth isn't quite as flat as the level has dropped almost 100 metres. As the cliffs close in, you come on Wadi Ma'in. The water having been dammed

Features

For peace to hold it must include all fronts

'Jordan has serious differences with the present Israeli government'

The following is the text of an address that ambassador to the U.S. Marwan Muasher made to APAC, the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee, on Sunday:

I AM glad to have this opportunity to address this conference to outline Jordan's approach to peace in the Middle East and the model of peace that we have adopted and are trying to advance.

Many developments have taken place since Madrid, resulting in the breaking down of many psychological barriers. One should not underestimate this fact because it is the first step towards true dialogue among the people of the area. The fact that the ambassador of Jordan is standing here today, the first Jordanian official to address an AIPAC conference, is an example of the distance we have covered in our attempt to create a new Middle East that is at peace with itself.

I would also like to convey the position of a country which has demonstrated that its commitment to peace has endured and withstood many challenges since the process started in Madrid and particularly since the signing of a treaty of peace between Jordan and Israel. Our treaty of peace with Israel has withstood episodes of tension in the relationship and has survived two different governments and three prime ministers. Jordan is extremely worried today about the negative ramifications of the present crisis that may spill over beyond the Palestinian-Israeli track, thereby affecting the entire region.

When Jordan opted for peace, it did so based on a strategic decision to rid the region of the policies of conflict, and develop a new external environment of cooperation and interdependence with Israel and with all the parties in the region as the only model that would ensure sustainable development. Jordan has sought a full peace with Israel, going beyond the mere signing of agreements between governments to normal interaction among peoples of neighbouring countries. Jordan has not only been committed to full implementation of the peace treaty, but to a proactive approach in seeking future areas of cooperation.

The framework is a peace treaty full with references to cooperation and mutuality, 15 sub-agreements covering all areas of cooperation, and a strong commitment to develop the Jordan Rift Valley in a new outlook that sees borders — not as separating edges — but as common interfaces. This qualitative peace provides tremendous opportunities for development for each of the countries involved and for the region as a whole despite the very real risks.

Jordan did so despite the fact that it was undergoing at the time two other reform processes that were challenging and taxing on its population. One is a political reform process which enhances public participation in decision-making at all levels and which consolidates democratic practices. The other is an economic reform program which aims at liberalising and modernising the economy, making it more competitive at the regional and international levels and integrating it into the world economy.

The decision to pursue peace had to withstand the test of scrutiny by a vibrant, vocal and institutional opposition that was part of parliamentary life and by a press that was free in its way to becoming the freest in the Arab World. The decision for peace was also taken while Jordan was in the midst of a difficult reform process whose aim was to transform the economic structure from one that depended to a large extent on outside factors and resources to one that generated largely internal and self-sustaining activity. That was done despite all that it entailed, with all the ramifications that such a transformation had on the social and economic levels of low-income groups. Naturally, these two processes of change in the political and economic domains had their critics and though they were a minority, they were rather vocal.

While many have argued that a country as small as Jordan should not attempt three reform processes simultaneously, Jordan could not afford to miss the chance for peace, as presented first in Madrid, in Oslo at a later stage, then the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and beyond. It did so fully aware of the risks of moving fast towards achieving a comprehensive peace but equally aware that one has to break away from the fortress mentality, cast away ideological stances, and take risks if that conflict is ever to be resolved. Jordan was not only looking for a decision that would be accepted by the majority of its public but was also equally concerned that that decision be a responsible one for its future generations.

Let me outline the parameters that define Jordan's approach to the peace process and our position on issues that are yet to be addressed and resolved. Despite the fact that we have signed a treaty of peace with Israel, differences in view on several issues do exist between the two of us. It is our hope that such issues can be resolved through working together in the spirit of partnership which is badly needed.

1. Jordan is committed to a full peace with Israel, one that would

result in a Middle East characterised by stability and peaceful coexistence which strengthens the forces required not only to sustain such peace, but also to develop it over time, not only by brokering agreements among adversaries, but also by creating a vested interest that would help build and sustain the resulting peace.

2. Jordan is committed to continuously addressing the Israeli public with a clear message of peace, regardless of agreement or differences with the sitting government in Israel. By the same token, this commitment to peace makes it incumbent upon us to speak frankly and candidly when we do have differences with any particular Israeli government, which is what I am doing today.

3. Jordan is committed to strengthening its new institutional relation with mainstream American Jewish organisations and the American Jewish community. Indeed, that dialogue started since the beginning of the peace process. While we might differ on some issues, we do share a common vision of peace. We are very pleased with the progress we have made towards a long lasting relation. It has helped both of us understand where the other is coming from.

4. The Jordan-Israeli treaty of peace offers a potentially ideal example to emulate, if that model succeeds. But it should always be understood that it is not a substitute to reaching an agreement with the Palestinians. Therefore, Jordan's position is that by supporting progress on other tracks, and in particular on the Palestinian-Israeli track, Jordan is supporting its own model and vision for peace, and indeed enhancing the chances of success for its own model. In this regard, the decision by the U.S. Administration and Congress last year to increase aid to Jordan to the level of \$225 million annually bodes well not only for the country, but for the whole region as well, because of what it means as support for a model, not simply a country. It comes at a time when, despite all our efforts, such assistance is needed in a transition period where political progress in the peace process has been lacking in the region. We are undoubtedly very appreciative of this support and for all what it means.

The message we have continu-

ously tried to send is that if the Jordanian model of peace — which successfully addresses the basic needs of Israelis — fails despite all our efforts, it would be difficult to imagine any other model being put forward, supported and succeeding. Just as we have attempted, successfully, to address the basic needs of Israel and its people, we believe Israel has to do the same for Jordanians and all Arabs so that peace can be supported and maintained at the grass-roots level.

5. It should be clear that Jordan will not be an alternative

'It should be clear that Jordan will not be an alternative negotiations partner to the Palestinians, and Jordan's land will not, as George Will and other conservatives would like it to be, serve as an alternative homeland for the Palestinians simply because Jordan is not a transitory state and because the Palestinians want to establish a state on their own soil.'

negotiations partner to the Palestinians, and Jordan's land will not, as George Will and other conservatives would like it to be, serve as an alternative homeland for the Palestinians simply because Jordan is not a transitory state and because the Palestinians want to establish a state on their own soil.

6. Jordan is committed to a comprehensive peace. While the Jordan-Israeli treaty of peace is here to stay, and Jordan's commitment to that treaty is ironclad, the ultimate objective of reaping the true benefits of peace, economically and culturally, can only be fully realised by a comprehensive peace that brings economic stability to the region and political solutions that are acceptable to all the parties. These should include meeting the basic needs of the Palestinians, including their right to self-determination and statehood on their own soil. While Jordan's treaty of peace with Israel constitutes an important core of this comprehensive peace, all of the components of such a peace have to be in place if the region is to

enjoy stability and prosperity, i.e. a Syrian-Israeli peace, a Lebanese-Israeli peace and a Palestinian-Israeli peace.

7. Jordan is committed to the terms of reference upon which this whole process has been based and the terms of reference which all the parties have agreed to. Foremost among them is U.N. Security Resolution 242, which has somehow been conveniently dropped or ignored. While the Israeli government today finds it difficult to renege from a mere further 4% of the West Bank, we need to remind ourselves that 242 calls for Israel to withdraw from territories occupied in 1967. No interpretation of this resolution, even the unique one by Israel, would come close to Israel retaining more than 60% of the West Bank.

8. Settlements: Jordan's position, and indeed that of the international community, is that the building of settlements is in direct violation of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention, and contravenes the Palestinian-Israeli agreement which precludes each party from taking unilateral actions that prejudice the outcome of issues to be dealt with in the final status negotiations. Settlement building entails many dangers, foremost among them being the harming of Palestinian rights to land, water, agriculture, and industry, causing a crowding out effect on Jordan by forcing them to migrate. Therefore, we adhere to the sixth principle of Article two of the Jordan-Israeli Peace Treaty, which stipulates that the involuntary movement of persons in such a way as to adversely prejudice the security of either party should not be permitted.

9. Jerusalem: Our position is that the land of Jerusalem occupied in 1967 is Arab land subject to the terms of reference of the Madrid process, based on the land-for-peace formula. With regard to the Holy Places, the rights of all three religions should be respected equally, above the sovereign considerations of any state. Article nine of the Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty includes a clause that commits Israel to respect the present special role of Jordan in the Holy Shrines in Jerusalem. This clause does not infringe upon the right of Palestinians to establish their own state, with its capital in Jerusalem.

10. Refugees: Jordan is the

largest host country for Palestinian refugees, most of whom hold Jordanian citizenship. The Oslo accords led to the postponement of the refugee issue until final status negotiations. For this reason, the article dealing with refugees in the Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty stipulates that both signatories work to resolve the issue of refugees in accordance with international law, and relevant international resolutions in an agreed upon bilateral framework, in conjunction with, and at the same time as, the special negotiations on the permanent status of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. Based on that, we will resume multilateral negotiations on refugees in coordination with our Palestinian brethren over the right of refugees. We also acknowledged the wording in the Oslo agreements that the problems of displaced persons should be resolved through a quadripartite Jordanian-Palestinian-Egyptian-Israeli committee.

There is no doubt today that Jordan has serious differences with the present Israeli government. The sense of partnership between the two governments — necessary for breaking new grounds — has lost much of its vigour. The Mishal affair is only among the most recent of actions by the Israeli government that has contributed to the present state of affairs. Having said that, I stress that peace should not be held hostage to ill-advised actions or short-term difficulties. Clearly, a majority on both sides, indeed a majority in the world, wants peace to prevail in the region.

All of us, thus, share responsibility in making sure this becomes a reality, so that no one party, on either side, can allow extreme ideologies to stand in the process of peace-making and peace-building — a peace that all parties can feel comfortable with, and thus work to protect and preserve.

We applaud the administration's recent efforts to bring new energy to the peace process. These efforts do not impose solutions which no party wants but provide a road map to jump-start negotiations. They help the parties that today are either unwilling or unable to help themselves. Again, we feel that we all share a responsibility to support this effort until it bears fruit.

In this regard, the reluctance, indeed, opposition, of the present Israeli government to the latest U.S. proposals — an opposition based on an unwillingness to cede a further 4% of the West Bank — sends exactly the wrong message not only to the Palestinians, but also to the Arab World. The feeling in the Arab World today is that the Israeli government is not serious

about final status negotiations, and will not put forward any serious proposals to cede land and arrive at a credible final settlement, if its present position is any indication.

Having served as Jordan's first ambassador to Israel, I got to witness first-hand the average Israeli citizen's genuine need for security. It is a need that must be addressed in a satisfactory manner. Living in Israel and interacting with the Israeli society, I also sensed a lack of understanding on part of the Israeli citizen of his Arab counterpart's need for security. Collective punishment in the form of closure of the Palestinian areas, demolition of homes and the building of settlements are actions that contribute to the Arab citizen's feeling of the lack of security. Both sides need to realise the importance of security to the other and act accordingly. In this regard, security is not a need over which Israel has exclusivity. We believe that security, narrowly defined in the military sense, rather than security that comes from lasting peace and forging relations of cooperation, is not true nor lasting security. Even if they are narrowly viewed, the US proposals would leave 83% of the West Bank under overall Israeli security control (areas B and C).

His Majesty King Hussein recently sent a letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu urging him to act positively, constructively and urgently in response to the U.S. proposals, in order to save the peace process from an otherwise extremely ominous fate. We hope that Mr. Netanyahu does that, in order to move forward after a very dangerous and long lull, and in order to restore the credibility of the United States and the moderate countries in the region which has suffered largely because of the policies of the present Israeli government.

New relationships that are reshaping the Middle East? Without doubt. The question to pose, however, is reshaping it to what? We have a historic chance to open up and create a Middle East with economic opportunities and peaceful and secure coexistence, or we can stay in our fortresses and by doing so, risk a very dark future. We in Jordan have taken the extra step despite all the risks involved. A bold and wise choice for peace is needed if the future generations in the area are to indeed live in peace.

Where to go this weekend

Traipsing southward along the Dead Sea

By Richard Tanner

HEADING SOUTH-WEST from Amman, the main road to the Dead Sea passes Na'ur before descending into the Jordan Valley. Notice how much warmer it gets as you reach sea-level, and drier too. The hot springs of Wadi Hisban (track on LHS), the dolmens on the rocky ridges and the trees of Mount Nebo on the skyline are all passed (LHS). Near the checkpoint where the roads bears left is Telilat Ghassul, the classic Chalcolithic farming village occupied from 4600-3600 BC. Little can be seen on site but its 6,000-year-old wall painting has been preserved and hangs in the Amman Archaeological Museum, Al Qalaa.

Passing between the trees, shade for Friday picnics, sparrows and camels for hire, you can turn right for the Dead Sea Rest House which provides changing facilities for the saltiest swim of your life. Fed only by the Jordan River, some tributaries and a little rain, the waters have evaporated for thousands of years leaving the Dead Sea 33 per cent salty. You can float around to your heart's content, unless you have cuts, plaster yourself with black mud and shower off before jolting under a shade or refreshing yourself in the restaurant. If you fancy somewhere a little more exclusive, go south to the Dead Sea Hotel, soon to be eclipsed by the Mövenpick and then a Marriott, where as well as floating, jolting and drinking, you can sample recuperative therapy or notice that the "lowest point on Earth" isn't quite as the Dead Sea level has dropped almost to -400 metres.

Further south, as the cliffs close in from the left, you come on Wadi Ma'in, the bubbling water having been dammed

by the "shabab" to improve their Friday horseplay. It is possible to walk up to the health centre by following the gorge for about an hour. Around the corner is Zura Park by the scruffy "caff" (LHS). Across the road and below the reerected columns is the Dead Sea harbour. Herod presumably escaped from 'Ain Gedi or Jerusalem, using this sole port on the east side, to bathe in the healing thermal waters of Callirhoe before retiring to his fortress above. Machserus can be reached by a rough path but you may prefer to wait till the Roman road up is located. On the "caff" side, a palace has been partly excavated, allowing you to see how hot springs were diverted into a giant bathtub. Wandering among the palm trees reveals some 30 springs running at 50 to 60°C, regularly used by area residents and, at quieter times, birds.

Continuing on the new road between the brine and the overhanging rocks, you reach Wadi Mujib, its bridge opening the way to Aqaba. Here is another spectacular gorge, but so dangerous it has now been fenced off. Lode for fishermen casting their bread on the water for the fish to come up and be netted. Below is the delta where Mujib material is dumped. As the Jordan River carries only five per cent of its normal flow, the rest evaporating from reservoirs or being used for irrigation, so the Dead Sea is sinking, and the Mujib is cutting down into its delta, Pre-reach the new level 10 metres lower. Presumably, more Dead Sea shrinkage will bring about the collapse of this new road as other streams cut down.

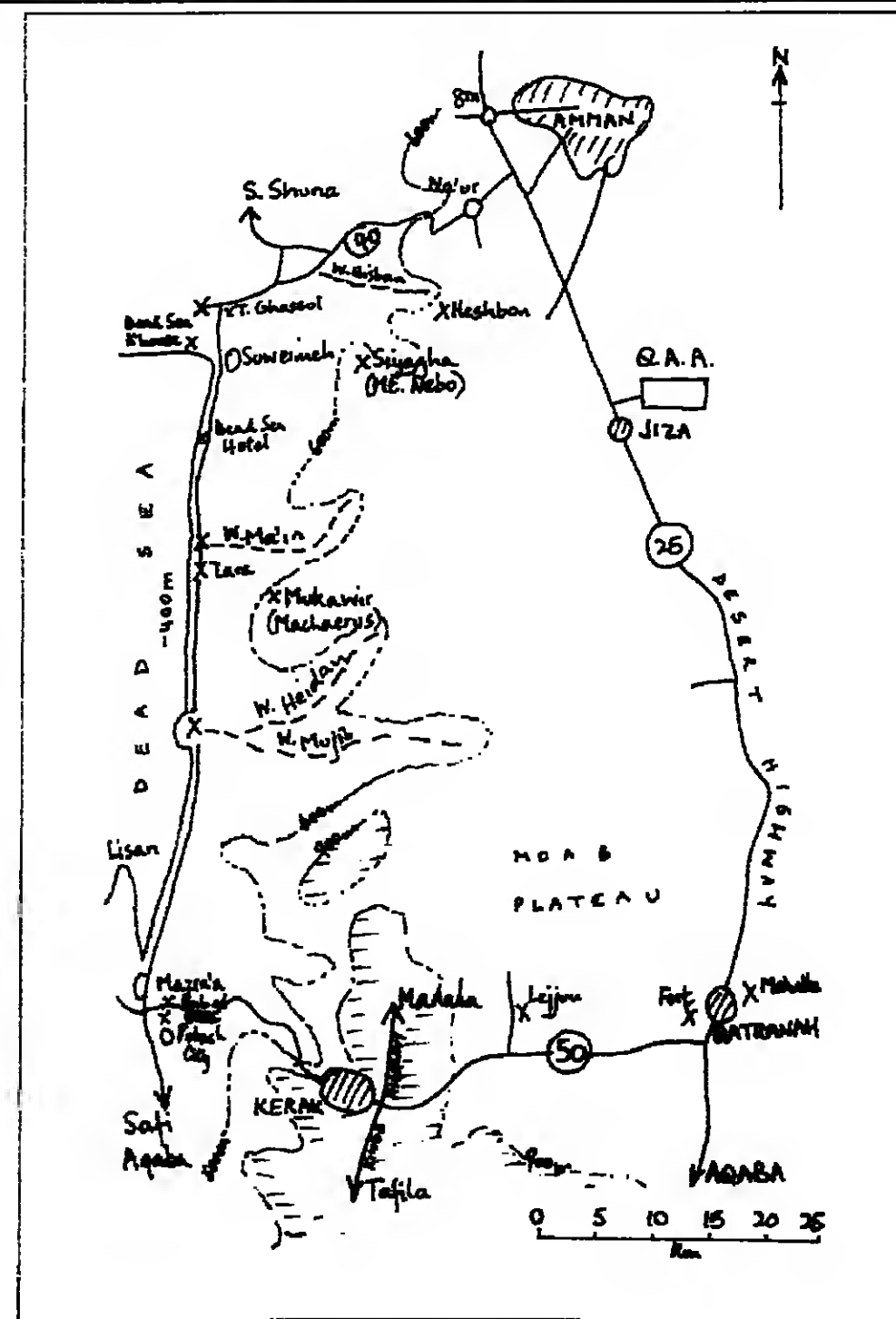
On again, and a low peninsula appears in the Dead Sea, the Lisan (= tongue), washed out from W. Karak. Look among the rocks for various birds, including

rose frich, and aloft for hawks and migrants, preserved by the area's recent isolation. After Mazra'a turn left for Karak. The road cuts through an Early Bronze Age site, Bab Ed-Dhra (3300-2000 BC). To the north (LHS) lies the walled town, part collapsed into the dropping wadi, but with solid enough stone walls remaining to demonstrate its former glory. On your right (south) is an enormous cemetery which extends under Potash City.

As you approach the Rift Valley Wall, 1,000 metres high, you wonder how the road will climb to Karak. But winding along the sides of the W. Karak chasm, the spectacular views west over the shimmering Dead Sea give way to equally sunning glimpses of Karak Castle high above. As you reach the town wall, sharp right and wander round the main street leading for another right taking you up to the rest house and castle.

When you have savoured Karak, take the road out of town for Qatraneh, passing Lejjun, a Roman legionary camp three kilometres north (LHS) before dropping steeply into a different sort of winding gorge and cut across the flat land to Qatraneh. Left on the Desert Highway brings you to an early Ottoman fort nicely restored (LHS) and a late Ottoman railway station (RHS), each providing stops on the pilgrimage route from Damascus to Mecca. Continue north through Jiza, with its ancient reservoir (LHS), past Queen Alia Airport, to begin your climb back into Amman.

The writer, an ex-principal of a British school, is now teaching at Amman Baccalaureate School. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.





Minister of Foreign Affairs Jawad Anani (left) and Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Shaath discussing economic cooperation Tuesday

Anani, Shaath discuss cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani Tuesday discussed with Palestinian Planning and International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath means of enhancing Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation in various fields.

The two officials discussed a mechanism for institutionalising economic cooperation in such areas as free trade zones and joint projects. They also discussed enacting investment laws and

Arab Gulf states haggle over customs barriers, remain split on union

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states are still haggling over how to tear down their customs barriers in line with a 15-year-old agreement to set up a common market, officials have said.

Despite several rounds of talks over the past few years, the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) remains split on proposals to reduce the percentage of national contribution to the output of industrial units so they are exempted from customs tariffs in member states.

A technical committee met last week and recommended lowering that percentage to 30 per cent from 40 per cent, but Saudi Arabia was opposed, according to a memorandum by the Riyadh-based GCC secretariat.

"Saudi Arabia expressed reservations on the proposed cut in national contribution to the added value in industrial units in the GCC," according to the memorandum, published in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Bayan.

The added value includes the difference between the institution's total turnover and the costs of the raw materials, goods and services used in production at that unit.

The added values in various sectors make up the gross domestic product, the

Wider Arab contacts with European NGO's can attract more funding to region

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — European Commission (EC) officials believe more funding could be allocated to the region if Arab non-governmental organisations (NGOs) initiated more contacts with their European counterparts.

"The co-financing of European NGO projects ultimately comes from European civil society," said Alkis Diamantopoulos, administrator at the European Union's (EU's) division of decentralised cooperation and co-financing with NGOs.

"Countries in the world manage to rally international support and funding for their problems through a visible and well-organised campaign," he said in a recent interview with the Jordan Times.

Mr. Diamantopoulos said the EC was seeking to catalyse a stronger participation of European NGOs in the Mediterranean region and to have their activities more focused on the poorest sectors of society.

The budget, known as the B7/6000 budget line, has been co-financing projects by European NGOs in the region since 1976, including schemes in the West Bank.

Its mandate calls for the "direct satisfaction of the basic needs of the poor," said Amedeo Brusasco, in charge of co-financing development projects with development NGOs at the EC.

"We are talking of co-financing basic needs encompassed mainly in food security, water, health, training, and micro-credit," he told the Jordan Times.

Plans to enlarge the 15-member group will further strain the EC budget as the group will have to help newcomers upgrade their socio-economic and political systems to make them compatible with those of the EU.

At present, only seven per cent of the EC developmental budget has been allocated to the Mediterranean region, with funding mostly going to Lebanon and "Palestine", Mr. Diamantopoulos said.

women's education and health awareness as well as improving the living conditions of four Badia communities.

The BUNIAN project for the capacity building of Arab NGOs, and the improvement of networking among Arab and European NGOs, is funded by the EU.

The unit also helped set up a children's nursery and health centre at Baqa'a camp.

Each year JD 700 million is channelled from the EC to NGOs for development purposes — around 15 per cent of the EC's development budget. Out of that, a total JD 200 million is allocated to co-finance 800 projects.

Co-financing projects across the region were relatively weak during 1994-95 because Arab NGOs could not muster European support for their programmes.

Some Arab and European NGO representatives feel that weakness in communication or networking between Arab and European NGOs lies in the fact that there does not exist a strong Arab NGO network which could represent the problems of the region in a comprehensive and clear manner to their counterparts in Europe.

European Commission officials are convinced that Arab NGOs could better communicate the problems of the region to European civil society partners and the EC when they become stronger partners amongst themselves with an on going dialogue. This dialogue would then spill over into European civil society and the European Union (EU) in general.

Plans to enlarge the 15-member group will further strain the EC budget as the group will have to help newcomers upgrade their socio-economic and political systems to make them compatible with those of the EU.

At present, only seven per cent of the EC developmental budget has been allocated to the Mediterranean region, with funding mostly going to Lebanon and "Palestine", Mr. Diamantopoulos said.

"The Mediterranean could get a larger chunk of the cake if there were more applications by Arab NGOs and more cooperation with European NGOs," said Mr. Brusasco.

"Mashreq NGOs need to work better at cooperating amongst themselves and at establishing a regional identity," said Mr. Diamantopoulos.

He said that co-financing projects in the region by European NGOs helped to boost civil society in the Mediterranean countries.

"We are in contact with about 900 NGOs from the 15 EU member states. We co-finance projects with trust worthy and experienced NGOs working in development," said Mr. Brusasco.

He added that these NGOs must have development as their main aim, and have the administrative and financial capacity to undertake a project seriously.

The Barcelona Process has paved the way for the availability of direct funds and programs to civil society actors in this region," Mr. Diamantopoulos said.

Mr. Diamantopoulos said NGOs, key components of civil society, had a significant role to play in civil society as catalysts, fund providers, and as advocates of best practices and good ideas.

"The political dimension of the Barcelona Process attributes an important role to civil society and hence NGOs."

The EU's Agenda 2000 which deals with widening and deepening EU expansions will directly effect budget lines for external affairs. EC officials note that there will be no increase in available resources to the EU.

Mr. Diamantopoulos hoped that "most of the new expenses will be financed through growth and that the budget for external relations cooperation and NGOs will not be touched and will continue to grow as has been the case in the past years."

HOROSCOPES

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) For the first time so, it'll be easier than usual for you to learn, always inquisitive, but now you'll be voracious could run into problems, though. What you're conflicts with what you already knew. Actually, a way to compromise. Keep looking.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You're entering the few times all year you feel like wasting money. Does this happen? Well, maybe it's just to get you to lighten up a bit. Sometimes you can be pretty confident with your pennies. Celebrate this season by giving yourself something frivolous.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) It looks like the problem you're up against has to do with your home or family. Getting it handled will make your life a lot easier. Just one more push, one more difficult part, and voila! You'll break through to the other side!

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You're always positive, but now you're downright awesome. It'll be easy for you to figure out what's bothering a neighbour, for example. Point out the obvious in a gentle way. Your input will be greatly appreciated.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) If you work for somebody else, mention that it's about time for your annual review. If you are a freelancer, send out bills and make phone calls. You may have been putting this off because you didn't want the confrontation. But today, you might be pleasantly surprised.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Conditions are rather unsettled. You might even stir things up, if nothing interesting is happening. Today should be absolutely fascinating, if somewhat confusing. Hold on to your agenda, and have a great time while you're at it!

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're starting to think about travelling. Have you got plans for the weekend? If not, make a few phone calls this afternoon. Money will still be tight, so don't plan anything expensive. Do figure out a way to get a change of scene, however. A friend would love to see you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You could make quite a bit of money in the coming phase, as your attention focuses on other people's wealth — and creative new ways to make it your own. You're good at negotiations, so don't worry. This could turn out to be a great day, though a little nerve-racking at times.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You're being pushed to succeed. That could be due to the fact that there's something you want for your home. It's almost like the baby needs new shoes, so you have to get the money together. That's OK. This is beneficial, not only for the baby, but also for you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) New orders or assignments are coming in, but there could still be brief moments of ecstasy available. Don't leave it all to chance. Trust your intuition, too. That's going to be a valuable source of information, especially where romance is concerned.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) It's a good time to buy gifts. Most people don't think of a new couch as a present, but you and your sweetheart might, if you've been wanting it for a long time. If you don't have a sweetheart, then go get a gift for yourself.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Change things around at home. You might even want to move to a different city or change roommates or get a dog — something that disrupts the status quo. If you haven't already figured out how you'd like your life to look, do that first.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- 1 Birthday gift?
- 5 Arm joint
- 10 Persian ruler
- 14 Run without moving
- 15 Premiering classic
- 18 Coke or Pepsi
- 17 Ponce de Leon's quest
- 20 Nightmare street?
- 21 Ice expanse
- 22 Bewildered
- 23 Vera of fashion
- 24 Porous device
- 26 Repair runways
- 29 Paying passengers
- 30 Vacuous
- 31 Zigzag course
- 32 H. Hughes airline
- 35 Empty-nester's weight problem
- 39 Begley and Wynn
- 40 In the center of
- 41 Macabre
- 42 German city
- 44 Characteristics
- 45 Scarflike ties
- 48 Simon or Diamond group
- 49 Waterproof wool cloth
- 50 Jug handles
- 51 Air travel watchdog grp.
- 54 Ancient
- 58 Thin but strong
- 59 Feasts on Maui
- 60 Defeat
- 61 Visualized
- 62 Southern town in 60's
- 63 Tableland

DOWN

- 1 Marriage mate
- 2 Feline god
- 3 Urban renewal target
- 4 Coop layer
- 5 "Seinfeld" character
- 6 R.D. of psychology
- 7 Sailor's bed
- 8 Spanish gold
- 9 One-time female mil. group
- 10 Sir Walter and Randolph
- 11 Contain
- 12 Change to fit
- 13 Laughier syllables
- 15 Hit the road
- 16 New Haven campus
- 19 Visualized
- 20 Confronted
- 25 Vexes
- 26 Hoarfrost
- 27 Oklahoma city
- 28 Beatrix abodes
- 29 Dickens
- 31 Domesticates
- 32 Actress Garr
- 33 Stand by
- 34 Fruity quaffs
- 36 Flight on maps
- 37 the thought
- 38 Actual
- 42 Writer Waugh
- 43 Beach composition
- 44 Mother of Calcutta
- 45 Cat weapons
- 46 O'Donnell with a talk show
- 47 Reverse
- 48 Micah follower
- 50 Latin "8 others"
- 51 Abscond
- 52 Shakespearean lament
- 53 Cinema pooch
- 54 Molinaro and Martino
- 56 Taka to court
- 57 PC maker

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CLATH

KYMIL

SAPHIR

GIBNEN

Ans: THE _____ OF _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: CHAFE IVORY PIRATE PARADE

Answer: What the judge's wife sought at the dress store — THE VERDICT

Daily

A review of

Despite better j of Woolen Indus

THE WOOLLEN industries of Jordan have been hit hard by the drop in wool prices. The Jordanian Wool Textile Industry Association (JTIA) says that the price of wool has fallen by 10 per cent since the beginning of the year. This has led to a significant drop in the production of woolen goods. The JTIA is currently working with the government to find ways to mitigate the impact of the price drop. They are also looking for new markets for their products. The industry is optimistic that the situation will improve in the coming months.

REUTERS The Business

Major Currencies & Crude Oil

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP
US Dollar	1.7800	3.1600	2.4800
DE Mark	0.5622	1.0000	0.7563
GB Sterling	0.6320	1.5900	1.0000
CH Franc	0.7543	1.2025	0.7122
JP Yen	0.0072	1.0772	0.0081
CA Dollar	0.6597	1.2916	0.4370
IT Lira	0.0002	1.0136	0.0002
NL Guilder	0.4571	88.70	0.3662
FR Franc	0.0662	0.2000	0.0006

Midsize Exports

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	DM
US Dollar	1.4104	0.7098	2.3700	2.4
Jordan Dinar	0.7098	1.0000	1.7000	1.7
Saudi Riyal	0.2668	0.1890	1.0000	1.0
Bahrain Dinar	0.25	0.1800	0.9400	0.9
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0000	1.0
Award Dinar	0.2669	0.2162	1.2323	1.2
Ukraine Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0211	1.0
Algeria Dinar	0.66	0.4689	2.4800	2.4
Egyptian	0.2320	0.2377	1.0000	1.0

Energy

Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	14.91	14.78
West	15.50	14.71
Crude	14.91	14.79
Gas	12.45	12.61
Coal	153.00	157.00

Commodity

Commodity	Last	Previous
Gold (100g)	238.7	239.2
Silver (100g)	5.25	5.23
Platinum (100g)	593	595
30 Months	1379	1381
30 Months	1671	1677
30 Months	1272	1278
30 Months	555	557
30 Months	4855	4875

Energy

Commodity	Last	Previous
Crude (100g)	121.5	Spot
Gas (100g)	2502	Spot
Coal (100g)	94.5	Spot
Alum (100g)	264	Spot
Steel (100g)	22.29	Spot
Iron (100g)	115	Spot
Lead (100g)	0	Spot
Copper (100g)	410	Spot

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Despite better financial results, chairman of Woollen Industries complains of difficulties

**** THE WOOLEN Industries Company** has increased its capital from JD1 million to JD1.4 million following the approval of the general assembly to distribute 40 per cent of the par value of each share as a free bonus to shareholders. The JD0.4 million was an amount carried on the books as premium of shares issued at a price higher than the par value.

The general assembly also approved the distribution of dividends at a rate of 10 per cent after the company posted higher sales and profit last year. According to the annual report, the Woollen Industries Company raised its sales by 10.8 per cent to JD1.33 million compared to JD1.2 million in 1996.

As a result, gross profit increased from JD283,000 in 1996 to JD311,000 at the end of last year. Net profit after tax was slightly higher as it stood at JD129,000 (JD118,000 in 1996). Board chairman Jamil Maraqa told the shareholders that costs of material used in production have risen by 27.3 per cent, or JD163,000, as a result of the company's focus on the production of mink blankets which are of a higher quality. The production cost rise from JD598,000 to JD761,000 was also attributed to a 22.9 per cent increase in producing blankets.

Dr. Maraqa told the shareholders that the difficulties faced by the company was a result of widening economic recession and weakening purchasing power of consumers. He indicated that while the government lowered customs on imported products a number of times, it refused to exempt the company's production input from taxes and fees. The continued closure of the Iraqi market and the heightening competition from imported blankets were also among the problems, the chairman said.

However, despite the difficulties he mentioned, Dr. Maraqa highlighted the success of the company in producing and selling 85,000 blankets or around 85 per cent of the production and sale figures estimated in last year's plan. "The concentration on producing mink blankets was even higher than the rate envisaged in the plan," he said stressing that the company is seeking to bring up production and sales to 110,000 blankets with a 70 per cent concentration on mink blankets.

The chairman concluded by emphasising that the company has followed new selling methods and has opened other "marketing windows" in most cities and villages in the Kingdom. Efforts will also be focused once again on exporting to neighbouring markets," he said.

Latest financial statements show that the company's total assets amount to about JD1.94 million and that shareholders' equity total JD1.64 million (Al Aswaq + Al Ra'i).

Dead Sea Industries Company teams up with U.S. firm to set up \$120m bromine factory in Jordan

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Dead Sea Industries Company (DSIC) and the U.S. Albemarle Corporation Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a \$120 million bromine factory in Jordan.

The DSIC, a subsidiary of the Arab Potash Company (APC), and the Virginia-based firm will finance 40 per cent of the project while the rest will be obtained through foreign loans, the APC board Chairman Saleh Irsheidat said.

He added that the two sides have consulted with some international financial institutions that are interested in giving loans to the project.

Dr. Irsheidat told reporters that the new joint

venture will enable the Kingdom to produce not only the bromine but also other necessary components that are part of other industries.

The APC chairman said the new project will create 300 job opportunities in the country.

Albemarle will provide the venture with engineering technology in addition to marketing and manufacturing expertise needed in the proposed project, Dr. Irsheidat said.

The American firm is one of the leading suppliers of bromine chemicals. The company has been supplying bromine chemicals to its worldwide customers for over 30 years.

Dr. Irsheidat, who was speaking at a press conference, said the agreement stipulates the production of 50,000 tonnes of bromine

annually. He added that the factory will start its production by 2001.

Dr. Irsheidat expected the project to earn the two sides an annual income of \$120 million every year.

He said that the agreement with the American firm was concluded during a visit by Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani to Washington earlier this month.

Dr. Irsheidat said the proposed factories will be established at Al Safi mines near the Dead Sea. He did not say when the construction work will start.

The APC chief indicated that the joint venture will also produce 50,000 tonnes of tetra bromo bisphenol and 35,000 tonnes of calcium bromide. The Asian and European markets will be targeted for the bulk of the output.

The bromine is widely used for polymers, surfactants and biocides, pharmaceuticals, agricultural chemicals, photographic chemicals, water treatment and petroleum products.

Earlier this year, news reports indicated that Jordan and Israel were negotiating the establishment of a bromine factory at the Dead Sea but apparently the talks between the two sides have failed to reach an agreement.

Dr. Irsheidat said the APC and DSIC have negotiated with several firms worldwide before "being satisfied that the best conditions were those received from the American firm."

He said that competition with Israeli firms, which are also producing bromine, to market this product worldwide was irrelevant because "there

are few countries which produce this material which have high demand in world markets."

In addition to the proposed bromine firm, the DSIC will establish a \$40 million factory to produce the chlorine which is needed in the bromine production, DSIC's Chairman Talal Erekat said during the press conference.

Mr. Erekat said that his firm was considering to invite a "strategic partner" to take part in the financing of the chlorine factory, with an estimated capacity of 100,000 tonnes annually.

"We are in contact with some parties and we hope that we will come to an agreement soon," Mr. Erekat said. He added that the proposed project will create 120 jobs.

The APC owns 51 per cent of the DSIC's capital.

Ancient railway could be revived as touristic project

By Ahmed Naser
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An ancient Ottoman railway track that interconnected the stretch between Mecca and Istanbul during the Ottoman empire may be brought back to life according to Turkey's ambassador in Amman, Suba Umar.

"I have it in my mind as a tourist project... and it is important both for Turkey and Jordan, because of its historic significance," Mr. Umar said Monday at the Turkish Days in Jordan expo, featuring 90 Turkish companies and organised by the Turkish Ladin Company and the Jordanian Businessmen's Association.

"It is the only railway track in the region," he said, adding that "railway transportation is cheap, especially in the Middle East." As such, the opportunity to utilise it should not be neglected, he stressed.

Mr. Umar said that at a later stage the railway track, expected to cost JD160 million, would be used for freight transportation. The Hijazi railway track was built at the turn of the century to transport military supplies and pilgrims along the Ottoman empire's vast expanse.

In 1917, the track, running from Ma'an to Mecca, was destroyed by Arab armies during the Great Arab Revolt against the Ottoman occupation, nevertheless, other routes such as the

Ma'an-Damascus route and another leading to Haifa in Israel are still running.

If the track comes back into operation between Jordan and Turkey, the Kingdom would have a door into a 200 million strong market — the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Council (BSECC).

Jordan has applied for an observer role within the BSECC which according to Mr. Umar, Turkey has been lobbying for strongly. "Unfortunately... Greece blocked Jordan's application for an observer position into the [BSECC]," Mr. Umar said.

Nevertheless, the Turkish ambassador was confident that this obstacle will be overcome which he said

would be beneficial for Jordan on both an economic and political level, indicating that it would materialise within a short period of time.

The balance of trade between Jordan and Turkey has been gradually evening out. In 1995, Turkish exports to the Kingdom amounted to \$169 million versus \$21 million the other way round.

Last year, Jordan exports to Turkey reached \$29 million, in comparison to \$106 million of Turkish product imports to the Kingdom.

Among Jordanian export items to Turkey are phosphate, which could be increased if Jordan offers better prices than its "other" competitors, according to

Yasemin Oncel, regional coordinator of the Jordanian-Turkish Business Council (DEIK). Morocco and Tunisia also export phosphate to Turkey.

As such, bilateral trade ties look promising and large construction companies like Tepe INSAAT think they can carve a niche here, according to Orol Ataman, the companies overseas projects manager.

"Tepe is here for big projects in Jordan," Mr. Ataman said. Tepe recently finished building a complete city that can house 50,000 residents outside Ankara and has another project underway to build the highest skyscraper in Europe, a building of 57 floors, for the Turkish Bank in Istanbul.

"We are here for hotel projects and airports," Mr. Ataman stressed, hinting that Tepe is working to win an Aqaba hotel construction project with a local partner whose name he asked to withhold. Mr. Ataman added that Tepe is interested in the development of the joint Jordanian-Israeli airport in Aqaba.

However, this all depends on the success of the peace process, he noted.

Other attendants like the Palestinians have had a hard time conducting trade in the self-rule territories, said Yusef Lahham of the European-Palestinian Chamber of Commerce. There are 150 Palestinian companies attending the fair.

Mr. Lahham said that it was hard to conduct trade with Turkish companies because of harsh Israeli security measures in the self-rule territories, even though there was high demand for Turkish products.

In addition, Mr. Lahham criticised Israel's closures of the West Bank and Gaza and its promotion of insecurity as impeding the growth of the Palestinian tourist sector.

"Contrary to what the Israelis say, it is very safe in the Palestinian territories, especially in the Holy City of Bethlehem."

The fair held at the International Motor Show Exhibition Hall on the airport road will last till Thursday.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	MLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7850	0.6185	1.4830	136.45	1.4495	1789.00	2.0118	5.9870
DE Mark	0.5602	1.0000	0.3490	0.8307	76.43	0.8118	984.88	1.1268	3.3637
GB Sterling	1.6220	2.8866	1.0000	2.4084	221.41	2.3517	2863.10	3.2631	9.7109
CH Franc	0.6743	1.2028	0.4182	1.0000	91.99	0.5770	1185.31	135.57	4.0344
JP Yen	0.0073	1.3872	0.4612	1.0862	1.0000	1.0618	12.88	147.33	4.3845
CA Dollar	0.6897	1.2915	0.4225	1.0666	1.06	1.0000	1270.80	1.4561	4.3265
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0136	0.3489	0.8842	1290.39	0.8233	1.00	11.42	3.3998
NL Guilder	0.4971	0.8870	0.3062	0.7372	67.79	0.7205	974.12	1.00	2.9752
FR Franc	0.1670	0.2980	0.1025	0.2475	22.77	0.2421	33.69	1.00	3.3690

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7505	0.3770	3.6400	0.3061	3.6725	1912.00	3.4135
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2898	0.5917	5.1340	0.4317	5.1804	2132.88	4.8145
Saudi Riyal	0.2656	0.1890	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.0816	0.98	403.15	0.9101
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8906	9.9483	1.0000	9.86	0.8119	9.74	4010.81	9.0544
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	1.00	0.0841	1.01	415.31	0.9378
Kuwait Dinar	3.2869	2.3162	12.2525	1.2315	11.89	1.00	12.00	4939.56	0.9378
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0211	1.0211	0.9910	0.0833	1.00	411.66	0.9294
Lebanese 1000	0.66	0.4689	2.4806	0.2493	2.4074	0.2024	2.4292	1.00	2.2576
Egyptian	0.2930	0.2077	1.0987	0.1104	1.0664	0.0897	1.0760	442.95	1.00

Energy					Mid-East Currencies				
Oil	Last	Review	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	
Brent	14.91	14.76	SA Riyal	0.2656	0.1890	0.16438	0.3998	36.4087	
WT Texas	13.50	14.11	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.1930	0.16788	0.40396	37.1776	
Bonny	14.91	14.76	KW Dinar	3.2869	2.3162	0.16788	0.40396	37.1776	
Dubai	12.46	12.61	BH Dinar	0.3770	0.2709	0.16788	0.40396	37.1776	
UL Gas	153.00	157.00	CY Pound	1.899	1.3997	1.1701	2.8162	259.119	

Metal Prices			Libor Fixing				
Metal	Bid	Offer	Period	1-M	3-M	6-M	1-Y
Gold (oz's)	298.7	299.2	Cncy	Month	Month	Month	Year
Silver (oz's)	5.25	5.22	USD	5.6841	5.7344	5.8125	5.9031
Platinum (oz's)	393	395	GBP	7.4635	7.5000	7.5052	7.5985
AL (3 Months)	1379	1381	JPY	0.6729	0.6146	0.6583	0.6875
CU (3 Months)	1673	1677	DEM	3.6062	3.7063	3.8186	4.0312
Zinc (3 Months)	1072	1076	FRF	1.7600	1.7917	1.8845	2.0208
Lead (3 Months)	555	557	CHF	3.6313	3.6956	3.7227	3.9375
NI (3 Months)	4885	4876	ITL	5.8410	5.8829	5.8720	1.00

Energy			JOD Cross Rates		
Commodity	Last	Delivery	Currency	Buy	Sell
Coffee (c/bs)	131.5	Spot	US Dollar	0.706	0.710
Cocoa (\$/ton)	2002	Spot	GB Sterling	1.1479	1.1536
Sugar (\$/ton)	264.5	Spot	DE Mark	0.3965	0.3985
Wheat (\$/ton)	93	Spot	CH Franc	0.4789	0.4793
Soya (c/bs)	28.29	Spot	FR Franc	0.1182	0.1188
Tea (c/bs/kg)	115	Spot	JP Yen	0.5212	0.5238
Barley (\$/bush)	9	Spot	NL Guilder	0.3919	0.3937
Rice (\$/ton)	410	Spot	IT Lira	0.4022	0.4042

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SWISSMINT											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 407173											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 19/05/1998											
	LAST 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	F / %	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
	HIGH	LOW									
S	355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	16.3	1.00	68	4020	804050	202.00	200.00	3.00-
	2.340	1.620	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.7	4.14	27	14183	24308	1.75	1.69	.06-
6	315.000	1.250	BANK OF JORDAN	4.3	0.00	3	1049	1384	1.32	1.32	-
	1.300	1.800	MID.EAST INV.BK.	61.7	0.00	5	2500	2355	.95	.94	.01-
S	360.000	1.600	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	8.3	8.70	6	2515	4074	1.63	1.62	.01-
TS	310	310	THE HOUSING BK.	19.8	3.19	126	55450	176258	3.30	3.13	.17-
	4.180	1.780	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	9.0	0.39	3	73	239	1.93	1.91	.02-
	.920	.950	JOR.GULF BANK	4.0	10.29	8	6100	4168	.70	.68	.03-
	6.020	1.600	JOR.ISLAMIC BANK	19.4	0.00	10	3900	7436	1.91	.90	.01-
	3.900	1.450	JOR.INV.FIN.BANK	12.5	6.13	4	350	566	1.62	1.63	.01+
	1.400	.800	BEIT.AL.NAL (BEITNA)	4.4	0.00	4	1050	956	.93	.91	.01-

INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			TRUNK: 121.80	%CHG: -0.05		4	1627	3533			
	2.340	1.630	JOR.ELECTRIC.PWR.	10.1	5.31	13	6600	13603	3.06	3.07	.01+
S	7.500	3.750	VEHICLES OWNERS FID.	11.5	4.39	6	3500	7010	2.80	2.80	-
	6.100	3.550	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	15.1	4.08	3	1650	8085	4.80	4.90	.10+
	1.950	.970	RAIL. PORTFOLIO	43.1	0.00	8	3700	3891	1.08	1.08	-
	.990	.330	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	9	0.00	16	9950	4351	.45	.43	.02-
	1.480	1.060	MID. EAST TRAVELS	9	0.00	1	1000	1000	1.08	1.08	-
+	4.400	3.100	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	10.3	1.92	10	4500	9525	3.15	2.08	.07-
	1.090	.900	SARFA EDUCATION	16.2	0.00	2	750	693	.93	.92	.01-
	1.830	1.490	UNITED CO.	6.7	7.38	6	2300	2322	1.52	1.51	.01-
	.610	.600	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	2	5000	3200	.64	.64	-

SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			TRUNK: 115.53	%CHG: -0.36		67	36850	53759			
	1.180	.960	ATANKERS	9	0.00	1	2000	3200	1.10	1.10	-
	4.450	3.450	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	14.8	4.42	38	14175	35394	2.53	2.49	.04-
	11.250	9.370	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.1	8.57	11	10216	10137	10.37	10.32	.05-
F	1.150	1.040	WOOLEN INDUSTRIES	12.4	6.37	13	3450	5383	1.55	1.57	.02+
	2.070	1.100	INDUSTRIAL CORR. AG.	9	0.00	4	850	1020	1.32	1.30	.02-
	5.740	3.650	ARAB PETROL. HNTY.	15.0	3.68	19	6800	38024	5.47	5.43	.03-
+	2.330	1.310	GENERAL TRADING	6.7	4.90	1	350	558	1.51	1.43	.08-
	6.350	3.450	JOZ ALDAMA DW. INV.	6.7	6.31	6	6870	38125	5.61	5.55	.06-
	1.570	.400	LIVESTOCK POLICE	4.0	850	1	870	870	.44	.47	.03+
	1.110	.670	ARAB PAPER CORP. LTD.	21.7	0.00	5	3000	2120	.72	.72	.01-

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 19/05/1998											
	1.050	.910	EXPORT & PET. INC. 75%	17.8	0.00	6	6100	4331	.97	.96	.01-
N	.620	.490	RAIL. PORT. REVT. BARR.	38.5	0.00	1	3000	520	.51	.52	.01+
	.400	.300	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	3	1000	520	.51	.52	.01+
	.530	.340	JOR. TRADE PCK.	9	0.00	1	300	93	.30	.31	.01+
	.660	.400	WIDOW INV. SOC.	9	0.00	6	16750	7708	.67	.67	-
	.760	.360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	7	5121	1382	.77	.77	-
	1.010	.720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	9	0.00	1	1500	615	.43	.43	.01-
	.610	.780	AL-DARJAN INV.	9	0.00	1	1600	1600	.77	.77	-
N	3.220	1.050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	38.6	0.00	7	50284	34687	.66	.66	-
	.290	.110	JOR. INDUS. MATCH-VENCO	9	0.00	17	44500	436	1.63	1.71	.08+
	2.470	.470	ARAB INTL. INV. FID.	43.8	0.00	9	20223	4895	1.63	1.63	-
	1.650	.860	UNION TRADING	9.9	0.00	31	59550	24595	.35	.36	.01+
	.730	.350	KALF PWRH.	N	0.00	4	649	448	1.93	2.04	.03+
	.740	.430	INDS. BNS.	9	0.00	22	11700	9909	.28	.27	.01-
	.890	.470	INDS. CERAMIC	13.1	0.00	4	5250	2625	.50	.50	-
	.950	.550	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9	0.00	5	3630	7248	.60	.60	-
	.710	.400	MAST. FOODST.	9	0.00	10	14500	7833	.54	.55	.01+
N	1.950	.470	OPTICALS READING 75%	12.0	0.00	3	9000	354	.65	.66	-
	.900	.750	EXTRA PRINT CO. 75%	12.0	9.59	3	750	406	.79	.79	-

GRAND TOTAL					176	357563	168744				

Batistuta dreams of Argentina

PARIS (AFP) — Argentina may not have Diego Maradona in the team this time, but star striker Gabriel Batistuta is already dreaming of lifting his country's third World Cup in France this summer.

"Batigol", as he is dubbed in Italy for his goalscoring feats with Fiorentina, has been enjoying some of the best form of his career in the run-up to his biggest test yet.

Now 28, Batistuta started out in Argentina with Newell's Old Boys, before joining River Plate and then Boca Juniors. He arrived in Florence in 1991 and had already established his credentials by the time the last World Cup finals came around in 1994.

Batistuta scored a hat-trick in the 4-0 demolition of Greece at the Foxboro stadium at USA '94, although the match is better remembered for the sweetly-struck goal from Maradona, shortly before the disgrace of the Argentine hero's drugs ban.

Batistuta returned to Florence for his best season yet, becoming Italian football's top scorer with 26 goals; which remains a record for the Serie A since it moved to 18 clubs in 1988.

The following season saw Fiorentina lift the Italian Cup, with Batistuta scoring eight goals in as many matches, including two of his side's three goals in a final over two-legs with Atalanta.

However, there was to be bitter disappointment in the European Cup Winners' Cup.

Fiorentina managed to reach the semi-finals against a Ronaldo-powered Barcelona, and Batistuta's fine second-half strike in Spain secured a precious 1-1 draw in the first leg.

But the Argentine's booking cost him a suspension for the second leg, and his team slumped to a 2-0 defeat, made worse by bouts of missile-throwing by an unruly home crowd.

Looking ahead, Batistuta may yet leave Italy for one of the top sides in Europe.

"Fiorentina are a great team, but the club certainly isn't," he said. "In Argentina, everyone knows Manchester United but the only ones who have heard of Fiorentina are people who follow me."



Mandela wishes S. African team good luck

PRETORIA (AFP) —

President Nelson Mandela treated the South African World Cup team to tea and pastries at his home Monday and wished them good luck for the upcoming France 98 championship.

"On behalf of the entire country, I say to you: God speed," the 79-year-old president told the Bafana Bafana team.

"I don't have the slightest doubt you will return with honours," he said, after shaking hands with the entire team.

The squad will leave South Africa after playing a friendly match against Zambia in Johannesburg on

Wednesday. Their opening match against France will be in Marseille on June 12.

Team captain Lucas Radebe responded to the president's good wishes saying: "We will do the best we can, also for you."

Apparently referring to a tussle at the weekend between a newspaper reporter and French coach Philippe Troussier over the inclusion of 17 foreign-based players in the squad, Mandela said: "There have been some problems, but I believe they have been overcome."

A wonder called Fish

PARIS (AFP) — May has been a merry month for young South African defender Mark Fish with wife Loui giving birth to their first child and his inclusion in an all-time African squad.

Only 24, Fish has been capped 37 times, featured in two African Nations Cup finals, one African Champions Cup decider, represented Africa and the World, and performed at the highest level in Italy and England.

The only dark spot on the horizon was the relegation last weekend of Bolton Wanderers because Fish knows playing English First Division football cannot enhance his international career.

Known as "Feeceesh" by his multiracial army of fans, the former striker helped unfashionable Jomo Cosmos reach the 1993 African Cup-winners Cup semi-finals before moving to more glamorous Orlando Pirates.

In 1995, the Buccaneers ended a 12-year North African monopoly of the leading club championship by defeating ASEC before 50,000 fanatical Ivory Coast supporters.

Fish rates that achievement even higher than the 1996 African Nations Cup triumph that set the defender with an eye for adventure on the road to international success.

He joined Italian club Lazio and made infrequent first-team appearances before moving last year to Bolton, where the South African scored several goals but could not keep them in the Premiership. "Reaching the African Nations Cup final despite nightmarish preparations was a magnificent achievement and augurs well for our chances in France," he says.

World Cup countdown with Franz Beckenbauer

Are you a World Cup expert? Then let me challenge you

51 African football is experiencing an impressive boom. Their best teams can really strike fear into the hearts of their opponents. I remember at the World Cup in Italy 1990 how my players and I were watching the quarter final between England and Cameroon. England came so close to being eliminated but went on to win the game 3-2. My players, along with millions of other fans watching the game on the little screen, empathised with Cameroon and applauded the African team's every dangerous move. Until I put a damper on their euphoria.

"Don't you realise that we could end up playing them?" I asked. Nobody answered. All the players started to think what a match against the Africans could signify. Then their thoughts turned to England — a team that we at least knew well. But Cameroon passed into history as the surprise team of this World Cup. However, they were not the first team from the African continent to take part in a World Cup competition. Which was the first?

Solve the geography question daily to find the phrase at the end of Beckenbauer's World Cup countdown

What's wrong here?



In 1997, a friendly tournament took place between Brazil, England, Italy and, of course, France. The four-team competition was meant to serve as preparation for the World Cup 1998 and also to inaugurate the new Stade de France stadium in St. Denis, Paris, where the opening match and the final are to be played in this year's competition. The photo is taken from the match Brazil-England (1-0) and shows a duel between England's Southgate and Brazil's Dunga and Aldair.

51 Two oceans collide here, albeit only briefly. More than anything else the country has in the past few years aroused interest because of its economic development. Its internationally best known politician now bears the name "senator" although 25 years ago he was better known as a putschist and dictator. The land's most famous writer, a lyric poet and Nobel Prize winner, died scant days after the aforementioned putsch. He wrote of his childhood in his home country: "It rained for years," the geographical shape of this country is somewhat impractical for travellers, being extremely long, top to bottom. Sideways it could be crossed comfortably on a bicycle, were not a troublesome mountain range in the way where the tallest peak in the continent can be found. Another extreme was a much used transit thoroughfare, which, however, has lost much importance in the meantime because of another construction linking two oceans thousands of kilometres to the north. It is rich in natural resources, a fact which in the past led to armed conflict with its neighbouring countries.

SOLUTION TO THE WORLD CUP COUNTRY CONTEST
The phrase we are looking for offers a rather precise, though harsh definition of an ability considered indispensable in the world of diplomats.

Please fill in the respective letters in the corresponding positions:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24
25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39
40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50
51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65
66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74

Solution:

Please enter the letters of the country as instructed in the solution squares as follows:

Second letter of the country in position 31.

Fourth letter in position 33.

Facts and figures about the participating countries

BULGARIA

110,994 sq km · Capital: Sofia
Population: 8,384,718 — 75.5 per sq km
Principal language: Bulgarian
Annual GNP per capita: US\$ 1,160 — (1994)

Participation in World Cup championships:

1930 1934 1938 1950 1954 1958 1962 1966 1970 1974 1978 1982 1986 1990 1994

Brown: the brains behind Scottish brawn

GLASGOW (AFP) — While Scottish club football has declined in recent years, Craig Brown has succeeded in ensuring the national team remains a force in world football despite limited playing resources.

Scottish football is no longer blessed with an embarrassment of talent and the influx of foreign stars into the country's leading clubs has restricted the development of young home-grown players.

But Brown, a former professional player as well as a schoolteacher, has moulded a solid and efficient, if unspectacular, team that has proved very difficult to beat.

There are few star names in the squad but Brown's tactical astuteness and sound organisation as well as a robust defence and an excellent team spirit have kept Scotland in the world's elite.

Brown, a genial and popular figure, recently signed a new four-year deal and he will be 62 when the contract ends after the 2002 World Cup.

He is also Scotland's technical director in charge of the country's coaches and the youth development programme.

Scotland Skipper Gary McAllister, who is recovering from a severe knee injury that will see him miss the World Cup this summer, is delighted Brown is remaining at the helm.

"It goes without saying that Craig has the respect of all the lads in the squad. His record is very impressive," says McAllister.

What a Daei for Iran

PARIS (AFP) — Ali Daei's family and close friends call him Sharier, or "king", a worthy title for the man who was world striker of the year in 1996.

He received that award after scoring 22 goals in 15 internationals for Iran.

Born in Ardabil near Iran's northwestern border with Azerbaijan, Daei became the first Iranian to ever play in Germany's Bundesliga when he signed with Arminia Bielefeld.

Prior to that he was a football hero at home, topping the goalscoring three times in succession, before moving to the club Al-Sadd in Qatar where he scored 50 goals in one season. He was also the second highest scorer in the Asian World Cup qualifying section with nine goals.

These were the credentials which brought him to the attention of Bielefeld. He signed there a year ago despite more lucrative offers from other Bundesliga clubs, English premier league sides and Galatasaray Istanbul in Turkey.

Through his and countryman Karim

Bagheri's presence, Daei says Bielefeld have won 60 million extra fans in Iran with local television stations broadcasting satellite footage of Bundesliga games.

The 29-year-old Daei has been warmly welcomed by Bielefeld's fans who sing a reworded version of a calypso-style Boney M song, "Hoo-ray, boo-ray, it's Ali Ali Daei."

He also carries, in part, the hopes of a nation on his shoulders as Iran tackle the United States, Yugoslavia and, ironically, Germany in the World Cup's initial round robin series.

Iran's beating of Australia to snatch the last available World Cup berth was greeted with mass street celebrations. The only time, Daei says, that he has seen greater euphoria was following the revolution which toppled the Shah.

After his footballing days are over Daei will retire home to Iran and help his family run the six sports goods shops he has helped them build up with his football earnings.

Hoddle aiming to make World Cup his first trophy

PARIS (AFP) — If Glenn Hoddle leads England to World Cup glory in France, the Jules Rimet trophy will be the first honour he has won as a manager.

Hoddle became the youngest of England's nine managers when he was appointed to succeed Terry Venables after the 1996 European Championships at the age of 38.

He had just five years of experience as a player/manager before taking on one of the most demanding jobs in world football after a string of leading candidates had ruled themselves out of contention for the post.

But he showed his talent for coaching the best out of players when he steered sleepy Swindon into the bright lights of the English Premiership via the first division 1993 play-offs on a shoestring budget.

A month later he quit to join London glamour club Chelsea and guided English football's most famous under-achievers into the final of the 1994 FA Cup which they lost 4-0 to a powerful Manchester United side.

Chelsea's re-emergence as a major force continued for a year and a half although Hoddle had no silverware to show for his growing tactical acumen and ability to motivate players.

Hoddle's potential as a top manager was clear, but it was still a major surprise when the Football Association turned to him after failing to persuade more experienced and successful candidates to take the England hotseat.

But Hoddle, who was persuaded to pursue a career in coaching by Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger while at Monaco, quickly confounded the sceptics after succeeding Venables in the

summer of 1996.

England finished top of their World Cup qualifying group after holding mighty Italy to a 0-0 draw in Rome — despite suffering a 1-0 defeat to them at Wembley when England lost a home qualifier for the first time in their history.

Hoddle's relative lack of success as an England player perhaps gave him greater cause to succeed as the team's manager. Despite their love of open, attacking football former England bosses Ron Greenwood and Bobby Robson failed to accommodate Hoddle's extravagant talents. He won a total of 53 caps between 1979 and 1989 but rarely produced the performances that made him such an exceptional midfielder at club level with Tottenham and Monaco.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Japan's Sugiyama through to 2nd round

STRASBOURG (AP) — Fourth-seeded Ai Sugiyama of Japan had an early scare in the first round of the Strasbourg Open tennis competition Monday, dropping a set to France's Nathalie Dechy before winning in three sets, 1-6, 6-4, 6-3. Wild card Julie Halard-Decugis, of France, also progressed to the second round, beating Thailand's Tamasine Tanasugarn, 6-4, 6-2. Maria Alejandra Vento, Olga Barabanschikova, Sarah Pitkowski and Adriana Gersi were other first round winners Monday. The \$ 200,000 tournament, which began Monday, ends May 23. Other seeds were scheduled to play later this week.

Sporting Lisbon coach quits

LISBON (AFP) — Sporting Lisbon parted company with coach Carlos Manuel on Monday by mutual consent. In a statement, the club announced that Manuel, 40, was not the man to lead the club's assault on knocking champions Porto off their perch. Sporting only just qualified for the UEFA Cup and have long been in the shadows of city rivals Benfica, who came second this season as Porto bagged a fourth straight title. Manuel only took over the club in late December and was the fourth coach the club had in a troubled campaign which saw him quickly fall out with internationals Oceano and Pedro Barbosa.

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 4631144	CINEMA TEL: 4631144	CINEMA TEL: 5699238	CINEMA TEL: 5677430	CINEMA TEL: 5934793	CINEMA TEL: 5934793	Hisham Yanes Road TEL: 4625155
	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 2	GALLERIA 1	STARTING APRIL 6TH
	Bruce Willis & Richard Gere ... in	Jim Carry ... in	The biggest cinema production	CONCORD '1'	ABDOUN	ABDOUN	Don't Laugh Please
	THE JACKAL	LIAR-LIAR	TITANIC	THE RELIC	Charlie Sheen ... in	Denzel Washington & Whitney Houston ... in	We're Jordanian
	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:00, 3:30, 7:00, 10:30 p.m.	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	SHADOW CONSPIRACY	THE PREACHER'S WIFE	Starring Hisham Yanes, Amal Dabbas, Rania Kurdi and the group
				ISMAILIA RAYEH GAI-KAMANANA		& still showing at 8:30 p.m.	at 8:30 p.m.
				Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		TITANIC	For reservations call: 4640155, 4625155

By Tariq Ayman
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Football Federation (JFF) Tuesday held a meeting to discuss the possibility of Jordan's bid to host the 2002 World Cup. The JFF President, Saleh Ibrahim, said that the JFF will take another step towards realizing its dream of hosting the 2002 World Cup by submitting a bid to the International Football Federation (FIFA) in the near future. He said that the JFF will be submitting a bid to the FIFA President, Joseph Blatter, in the near future. He said that the JFF will be submitting a bid to the FIFA President, Joseph Blatter, in the near future. He said that the JFF will be submitting a bid to the FIFA President, Joseph Blatter, in the near future.

Five tea Beach V

By Roufan Nabhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Beach volleyball is a new sport in Jordan — the first time in Jordan's history. The Jordan Football Federation (JFF) Tuesday held a meeting to discuss the possibility of Jordan's bid to host the 2002 World Cup. The JFF President, Saleh Ibrahim, said that the JFF will take another step towards realizing its dream of hosting the 2002 World Cup by submitting a bid to the International Football Federation (FIFA) in the near future. He said that the JFF will be submitting a bid to the FIFA President, Joseph Blatter, in the near future. He said that the JFF will be submitting a bid to the FIFA President, Joseph Blatter, in the near future.

Malone lifts Jazz past Lakers

UTAH JAZZ (AP) — Karl Malone sparked Utah to a 107-91 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers Tuesday night, lifting the Jazz to a 3-1 record in the Western Conference playoffs. Malone scored 33 points, including a clutch 3-point shot in the fourth quarter to seal the victory. The Jazz will face the San Antonio Spurs in the next round of the playoffs.

"I would like to switch with Michael this year," Malone said. "I won it last year and I am the biggest one. I really like it. That's what I can do for this team." Malone scored 33 points, including a clutch 3-point shot in the fourth quarter to seal the victory. The Jazz will face the San Antonio Spurs in the next round of the playoffs.

These games are the toughest to play," Malone said. "You come in here and the attitude to take two games. When they lose one, they become desperate for another win. We had in our mind all along that this is going to be a long series." Malone doubled his points in the final five minutes, scoring 12 points and 10 assists. He scored 10 points in the final five minutes, scoring 12 points and 10 assists. He scored 10 points in the final five minutes, scoring 12 points and 10 assists.

Utah Jazz the Los Angeles Lakers. Malone scored 33 points, including a clutch 3-point shot in the fourth quarter to seal the victory. The Jazz will face the San Antonio Spurs in the next round of the playoffs. Malone scored 33 points, including a clutch 3-point shot in the fourth quarter to seal the victory. The Jazz will face the San Antonio Spurs in the next round of the playoffs.

Football association, boycotting clubs meet today

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Football Association (JFA) Tuesday held a meeting to discuss the deadlock which has caused the suspension of the Premier League (PL) Championship, a JFA spokesman said.

JFA Vice-President Saleh Irsheidat said that another meeting will take place today (Wednesday) with presidents of the seven clubs that suspended their participation in the PL competitions demanding a review of the formula governing ticket sales revenue.

Informed JFA sources, however, said it was unlikely that JFA President HRH Prince Abdullah would attend today's meeting, adding that only the association's executive council members and chairmen of the seven clubs would be present.

The clubs have unsuccessfully been requesting to meet with Prince Abdullah to settle the dispute

since the seven suspended their participation on April 30.

The JFA consequently put the competition on hold after Al Faisalt, Kufrcum, Al Ramtha, Al Qadissiyeh, Al Hussein, Al Ahli and Al Arabi announced their boycott of the event until their demands were met by the JFA.

Irsheidat said he was "optimistic" that today's meeting will be a "positive" one, leading to the resolution of the deadlock which has crippled the country's most popular sports event.

The seven clubs are demanding that the 1997 agreement, which governs the distribution of the revenues, be revoked and suggested that all revenues be distributed equally among the ten PL clubs.

In April, the JFA signed an agreement with a consortium of four businessmen, in return for JD300,000.

The seven clubs said that the new agreement was a new development which "made it necessary to review the distribution of ticket sales

among the clubs."

But Al Wihdat, one of the Kingdom's biggest clubs, suggested that any change in the formula would make them reconsider their participation in the PL contest.

Another club, Shabab Al Hussein sided with the Al Wihdat and said that it does not favour any change in the ticket sales distributions.

Al Jazireh Club was the only party which has not supported any of the two camps.

Irsheidat stressed that today's meeting will be an attempt to convince the seven clubs to reconsider their decision.

"I believe that matters are not clear to some parties and we will make everything clear to them in today's meeting," Irsheidat told the Jordan Times.

"The details of the agreement (with the four businessmen) are not clear for the seven clubs. We will explain to them what benefit they will make out of the new agreement," he added.

Five teams compete in Amman Beach Volleyball Championship

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Beach volleyball is hitting Jordan — this time in Amman — when the 2nd International Beach Volleyball Championship for Women kicks off June 1-6 with five countries taking part.

The event, held as part of the Kingdom's Independence Day celebrations, will group teams from Germany, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan according to championship director Maher Al Nimri.

He told the Jordan Times that the

Crown Hotel had prepared a special court for the five-day event.

"Two professional teams will represent Germany: Al Amanah and Al Salam Clubs from Iraq; while Jordan's two teams are sponsored by the Crown Hotel," he added.

Syria are the titleholders after taking the top two spots last year in the First International Championship on the shores of the Dead Sea.

Their team of Maha Sweid, Hanan Mustrih, Sawan Hana, Safa' Saoud are expected to face tough competition from Germany whose players represent the national team.

Jordan who took the third place last year will be represented by Shereen Thalji, Iman Barishi, and Suhad Al Afghani. Lebanon was fourth.

Nimri said the hotel will organise the men's competition next year.

Beach volleyball consists of two players in each team with the same court as regular volleyball but played on sand.

The rules are slightly different from that of volleyball.

"It needs a lot of physical fitness from the players as they are playing on beach sand," he added.

Dalglish promised cash for assault on title

LONDON (AFP) — Newcastle boss Kenny Dalglish on Monday gained an assurance that money will be available for new players this summer as the Magpies bid to forget a disappointing season.

After losing the FA Cup final Saturday to Arsenal at Wembley, the board met at St James' Park to decide strategy for the coming season.

Alastair Wilson, the newest member of Newcastle's board who is charged with improving the club's poor public image, said: "Kenny Dalglish will be manager next season. And he most certainly will have money to spend."

"He has already identified a number of players, some in mainland Europe and some here in the UK. During the summer months he will be going about his business strengthening weaknesses he has identified within the squad."

Many of the club's fans and football fans in general would love to see the Magpies revert to the flowing football they displayed under former boss Kevin Keegan.

While Wilson believes this is not the answer, he feels that there is a middle way which would satisfy the fans and bring success to the club.

"Kevin is a close friend of mine, but although they were super days, unforgettable days, there were weaknesses at the back. I was just talking today about that wonderful match at Anfield when we lost 4-3 to Liverpool."

"With a bit of effort, we can maybe blend Keegan's cavalier style and the strength and organisational style of Dalglish to build a side to be reckoned with — I certainly hope so."

Hingis leads WTA rankings

MIAMI (AFP) — WTA rankings published Monday:

1. Martina Hingis (Swi) 6308 pts
2. Lindsay Davenport (USA) 3963
3. Jana Novotna (Cze) 3949
4. Arantxa Sanchez (Spa) 2798
5. Amanda Coetzer (Rsa) 2770
6. Monica Seles (USA) 2644
7. Conchita Martinez (Spa) 2617
8. Venus Williams (USA) 2615
9. Irina Spirlea (Rom) 2204
10. Iva Majoli (Cro) 2129
11. Mary Pierce (Fra) 2013
12. Nathalie Tauziat (Fra) 1936



Michael Jordan (R) of the Chicago Bulls holds his fifth Maurice Podoloff Most Valuable Player Trophy for the 1997-98 season at a press conference at the Sheraton North Shore Hotel in Northbrook, IL. Jordan is trying to lead the Bulls to their sixth NBA title (AFP PHOTO)

Michael Jordan gets 5th MVP award

CHICAGO (AFP) — Michael Jordan was Monday voted the National Basketball Association's Most Valuable Player Award for the fifth time, the third player in NBA history to do so.

The superstar guard of the Chicago Bulls received 92 first-place votes and 1,084 points from a panel of writers and broadcasters, dethroning Utah Jazz forward Karl Malone, last year's winner.

Malone was second in the voting with 20 first-place votes and 842 points. Nineteen players received at least one point.

Jordan last won the MVP in 1996 following the completion of his first full season after coming out of retirement in 1993. He also won the award in 1988, 1991 and 1992 and finished second to Malone last year.

Only all-time scoring leader Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, with six MVP awards, has been honoured more than Jordan. Bill Russell, who led the Boston Celtics to 11 NBA titles in his 13-year career, also has

won the award five times.

Asked whether the trophy should be renamed after him, Jordan replied that there were a "lot of great players who should have an opportunity to have their names on it ... I don't want to jump ahead these types of legends."

He welcomed the accolade but said "it will not be cherished until we (the Bulls) accomplish a sixth (NBA) championship."

The Bulls appear well on target for a sixth title. Sunday, they beat Indiana 85-79 in the first game of their NBA semi-final series.

This season, Jordan led the NBA in scoring for an unprecedented 10th time, averaging 28.7 points per game.

Although it marked his lowest average in 12 years, he played the first 35 games without All-Star sidekick Scottie Pippen, who was injured. The Bulls finished 62-20, tying the Jazz for the best record in the league.

Hat-trick ready for Juventus

AMSTERDAM (AFP) — Juventus will be aiming for their third European Cup trophy in the club's history here on Wednesday night, when they take on Real Madrid in their third consecutive final.

The Turin club will start as favourites after winning the cup in 1986 in Rome and surrendering it to Borussia Dortmund last year in Munich: a defeat which looks destined to make them even more motivated here.

Juventus have the experience, the players and another Serie A title, along with a near 60-goal partnership between Alessandro Del Piero and Filippo Inzaghi, on their side.

That record is a clearly cut above the Spanish side, who are deservedly a legend in European football. But like all legends, their success is very much rooted in the past.

Di Stefano's Real may have won the first five editions of Europe's most coveted football trophy, but they haven't reached a European Cup final since 1961, when they were sunk by Alan Kennedy's late strike for Liverpool at the Parc des Princes.

And the Spaniards haven't held the trophy aloft since the year England lifted the World Cup, in 1966.

This season performances in the Spanish Liga have been disappointing, and little short of disastrous away from home. They finished fourth in a championship won by their hated Catalan rivals Barcelona, and only secured a UEFA Cup slot by beating Betis 1-0 in the last game of the season.

German coach Jupp Heynckes is meanwhile widely expected to be looking for another job next week, irrespective of Wednesday's outcome.

The form book aside, the psychological advantage will be with a Juventus side determined to cancel the memory of last May's 3-1 defeat to Dortmund, when they were condemned by a series of uncharacteristic defensive lapses.

Del Piero, Italy's undisputed star of the Serie A, admitted: "There are a few bitter memories, a few disappointments which are still painful today. And top of the list is the final we lost year."

But the gifted striker, who in a few weeks' time will be leading Italy's attack at the World Cup finals, is wary of making predictions.

"A final is a one-off match and all the supposed advantages are cancelled out," he said. "Juventus might look like the favourites, but in truth, the chances are 50-50."

Along with Inzaghi, whose winner against Manchester United and hat-trick against Dynamo Kiev were crucial to Juventus' campaign, the other key figure in the Juventus attack is graceful French playmaker Zinedine Zidane.

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IN ORDER to keep an improved performance among Le Meridien employees, a training course (Revenue Management 2000) was held at Le Meridien Amman. Delegates from Le Meridien Damascus and Le Meridien Lattakia participated in this training, which was designed by a British expert team from the company head office in U.K.

Malone lifts Jazz past Lakers

SALT LAKE CITY (AFP) — Karl Malone sparked Utah past the Los Angeles Lakers for a commanding lead in the National Basketball Association playoffs, then sent a message to Michael Jordan.

Malone told the Chicago Bulls superstar who replaced him as the NBA's Most Valuable Player on Monday that he intends to replace Jordan as the NBA playoff MVP, something likely to happen only if Utah wins the title.

"I would like to switch with Michael this year," Malone said. "I won it last year and he won the biggest one. Hopefully, that's what I can try to do for this team."

Malone scored 33 points and John Stockton had a playoff-high 22 to rally the Jazz past the Lakers 99-95 here Monday and take a 2-0 lead in their best-of-seven Western Conference championship series.

After inflicting the worst loss in Lakers' playoff history, a 35-point blowout in game one, Malone was worried about the intensity for game two.

"These games are the toughest to play," Malone said. "Guys come in here with the attitude to take two games. When they lose one, they become desperate for the other. We've had in our minds all along that this is going to be a long series."

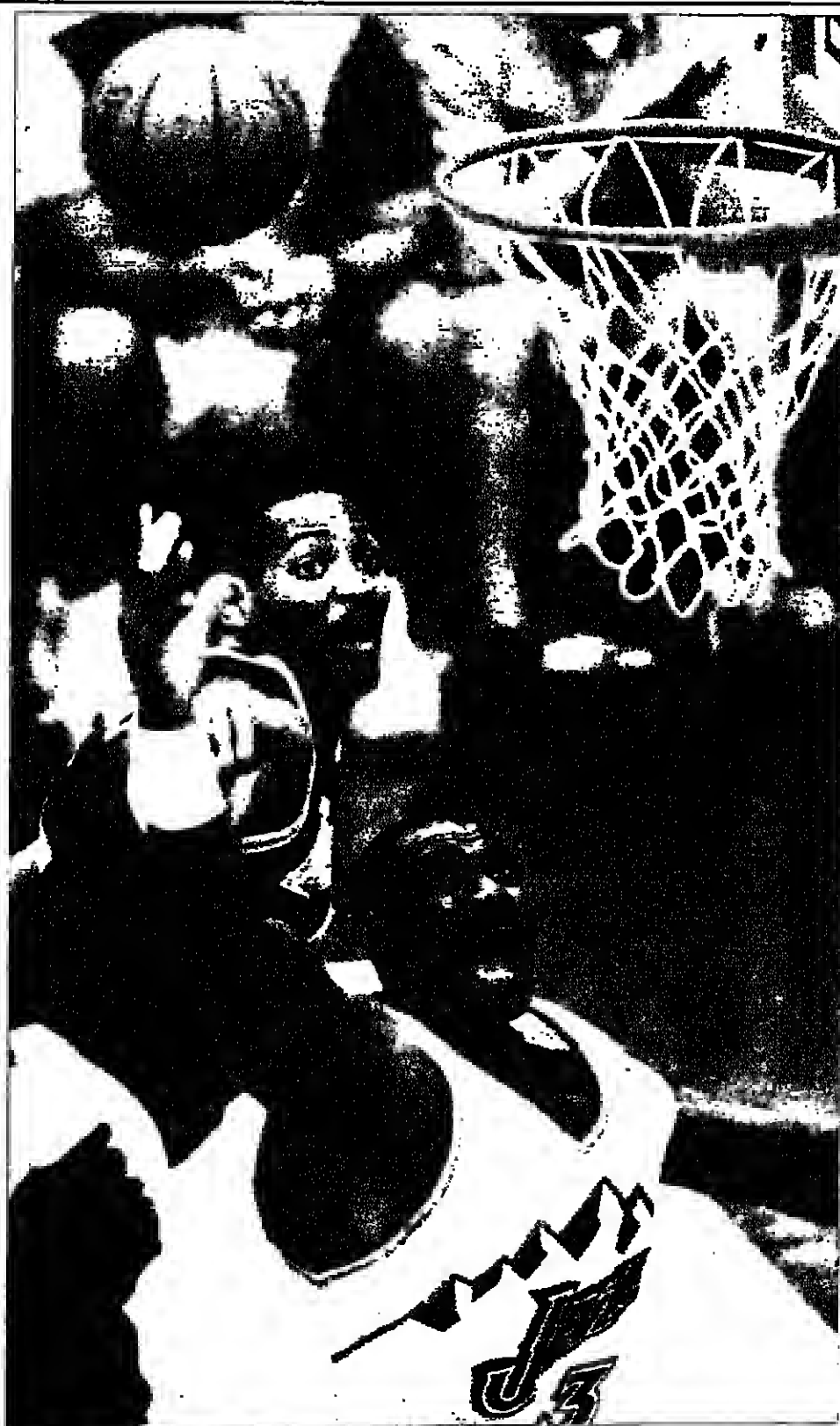
Stockton doubled his post-season scoring average by sinking 9-of-12 shots and adding six assists. He scored 20 points in the final five minutes and outclassed Lakers forwards Derek Fisher and Van Exel.

"We just played hard, played solid and played together," Stockton said. "We'll see what happens this weekend."

Malone had nine points in the final period, sparking a 13-1 Utah run early in the fourth that gave the Jazz the lead for good. But with two victories needed still to make the final, Malone has put off celebrating.

"These guys are very capable," Malone said. "When you start celebrating and feeling good about yourself, you get hit real hard."

Lakers center Shaquille O'Neal scored 31 points and made good on his promise to



Utah Jazz Karl Malone (R) drives for a lay-up during first quarter action against the Los Angeles Lakers in the NBA Western Conference finals in Salt Lake City (AFP PHOTO)

throw elbows, decking Jazz forward Antoine Carr in the final period.

O'Neal laid out Carr as he scored inside to give the Lakers a 75-72 lead with 10:31 to play. Carr started talking with O'Neal and seemed to inspire the Jazz, who scored the next 11 points.

"We really started hurting ourselves in the second half," Lakers coach Del Harris said. "We were in a hurry instead of valuing the possession of the ball."

The Lakers led most of the first three quarters until Malone and Stockton rallied Utah to a seventh home play-

off victory in a row.

"It should've never happened," said Laker guard Kobe Bryant, who finished with nine points on 3-of-10 shooting. "We lost our mental toughness. That's the only explanation for what happened."

"Then we tried to take the easy way out by throwing it into Shaq, not realizing that it's our job to get it to him where he could do something with it. We should've moved the ball more."

Game three of the series is Friday in Los Angeles, where Utah won last year in ousting the Lakers one round earlier. Trailing 96-93 in the final

minute, the Lakers went to O'Neal, who missed a hook. Utah's Jeff Hornacek made two free throws with 24 seconds left. After a tip-in by Eddie Jones, Stockton basically sealed it by going 1-of-2 from the line with 17 seconds left. Rick Fox missed two Laker three-point shots and the Jazz ran out the clock.

Hornacek scored 11 points. Russell added 10 and Anderson eight for the Jazz, who shot 51.5 per cent (35-of-68) from the field and made 27-of-38 free throws.

"When they play that way, they're tough to beat," Van Exel said.

Suharto vows to step down but protesters won't yield

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesian President Suharto said on Tuesday he would step down after seeing Indonesia through unprecedented reforms, but he refused to resign and fresh confrontation loomed with students demanding his head.

Thousands of students occupied parliament and top Muslim leader Amien Rais called for a "people's power" show of strength on Wednesday to convince Mr. Suharto his 32-year-long rule was over no matter what concessions he was now ready to make.

Mr. Rais has vowed to put millions of people on the streets of Indonesia. Students who for three months have been demanding that Mr. Suharto step down called for parallel demonstrations.

Many Indonesians fear the protests could foment a repeat of last week's riots in Jakarta in which 500 people died and hundreds of buildings were torched and looted.

In a historic televised speech, Mr. Suharto, who has brooked little dissent while in power, promised new elections as soon as possible under a new electoral law and said he would not stand again.

The concessions were major from a man who had yielded little to three months of increasingly popular student protests. But he did not say when it would all happen.

Later, Environment Minister Juwono Sudisno said the opposition should not worry about a lengthy reform process.

"There will be a new president by the end of the year," he told Reuters in a telephone interview.

He said Mr. Suharto met nine influential Muslim leaders on Tuesday morning, before the broadcast, then decided on a plan for elections within three to six months and his own departure.

A new electoral law should be ready within two months and was likely to do away with restrictions on the number of political parties and contestants, Mr. Juwono said.

Financial markets cheered the possibility of a peaceful transfer of power. The Rupiah and stock market staged mild rallies after days of downward spirals. So did



Indonesian President Suharto pledges to step down after new parliamentary elections which would be held as soon as possible, during a speech Tuesday broadcast live on Indonesian television (AFP photo)

most Asian share markets and currencies.

There was also a cautious welcome from Asian leaders who saw in Suharto's promises the chance of stability returning to Indonesia, suffering its worst economic crisis in decades.

That crisis drove Indonesia to agree to a financial rescue package of more than \$40 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but as political issues raged to the forefront efforts to resolve the country's burning economic issues have fizzled.

In Frankfurt, a German banking source said on Tuesday the next round of talks on how to reschedule the country's \$80 billion in private sector debt — scheduled for May 26 — had been delayed indefinitely.

"Conditions for such a meeting are not favourable at present," said the source, who declined to be identified. Since the crisis began in July,

many of Indonesia's 200 million people have lost their jobs. Prices are soaring. There is a widespread, and growing, clamour for the 76-year-old Mr. Suharto's swift exit.

The big question remaining was whether Mr. Suharto has waited too long to give ground after giving the impression he would hang on until the end of his seventh five-year term in 2003.

In his address, Mr. Suharto declared it would be irresponsible to step down when the nation was racked by riots and facing economic ruin.

But, he said, "there is no need to worry that I will remain president. Not at all."

The new election law would be drawn up by a reform committee of academics and community leaders and the new parliament would elect a new president, he said.

One of the nine Muslim leaders who met him before the

address was Muslim intellectual Emha Najib, who said the group told Mr. Suharto he should step down before the end of the year.

"He was not President Suharto as usual. He was a human being. It was very open," Mr. Najib said.

There was not the same goodwill from the thousands of students gathered at parliament who booed loudly when it became clear Mr. Suharto was not stepping down immediately.

Many protesters doubted if Mr. Suharto would honour his promise to hold new elections and about 200 of them clambered onto the dome-like roof of the main parliament building to unfurl anti-Suharto banners.

"He has made many political promises in the past, but they were never fulfilled," said one student.

Mr. Rais, who heads a Muslim Organisation claiming 28 million members in the world's most populous Muslim nation, said Mr. Suharto's promises did not go far enough.

"Tomorrow, Indonesia will witness fairly big demonstrations all over this country," he told reporters.

"Especially after the nation listened to the very disappointing statement by Suharto, I think people will be more motivated to come down to the streets to protest."

"They will again and again and again stage the demonstrations...until finally the old man goes forever," he said.

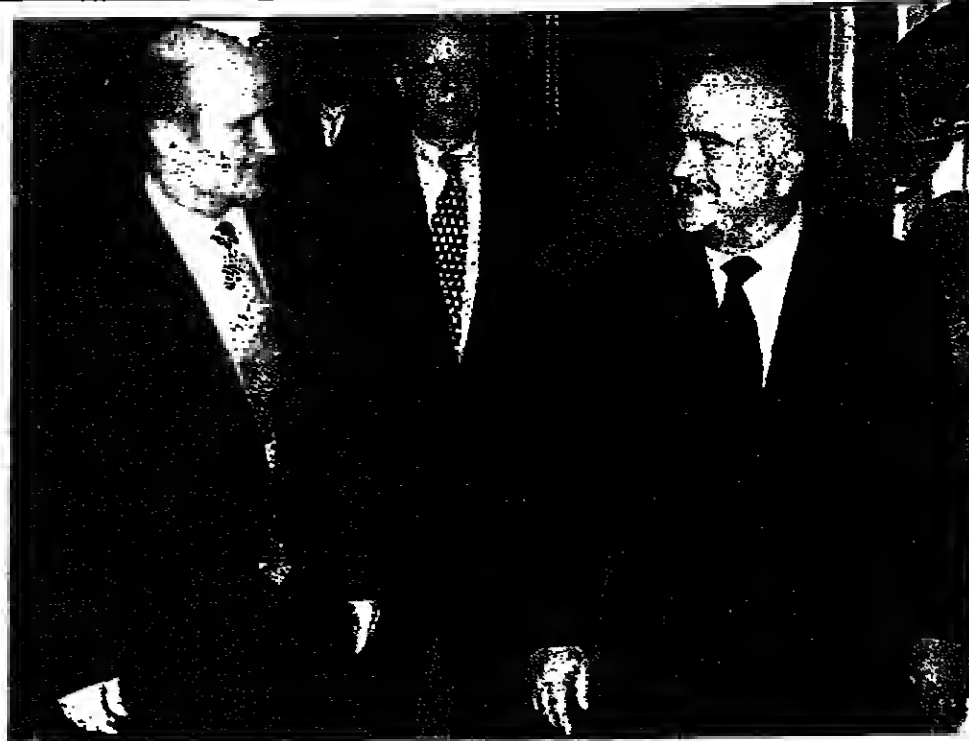
Adel Heryanto, a Singapore-based Indonesian intellectual with close ties to student dissidents there, said Mr. Suharto's pledges would not be enough to calm the people — and could spark renewed violence on Wednesday.

"The student dissidents are unlikely to buy this kind of rhetoric. There is likely to be another confrontation tomorrow."

Some students occupying the parliament complex on Tuesday said they were in no hurry to end their vigil against Mr. Suharto.

"We plan to stay here for the night," said one student as dusk fell, although many could be seen leaving.

"Tomorrow, we'll go to the presidential palace."



Crown Prince receives Russian envoy

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan met Russian envoy Viktor Posuvalyuk here Tuesday for talks on the Middle East peace process, Jordan Television said. The Crown Prince warned Mr. Posuvalyuk that the peace process "is going through a critical and delicate stage" and needs to be put back on track by implementing the signed agreements. During the meeting which was attended by Royal Court Chief Fayer Tarwaneh and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jawad Anani, Prince Hassan and Mr. Posuvalyuk also discussed the situation in Iraq. Crown Prince Hassan called for an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people and for Iraq to implement Security Council resolutions. Mr. Posuvalyuk has been on a tour of Lebanon, Syria and Israel to discuss the Jewish state's offer to withdraw from south Lebanon in return for security guarantees.

France, Egypt vow to save faltering Mideast peace

PARIS (AFP) — France and Egypt said Tuesday they were determined to take action to stave off the impending collapse of the Middle East peace process.

French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin said after talks here with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak: "France and Egypt cannot stand by and see this deterioration, to let this impending catastrophe happen."

The two countries issued a joint statement on Monday calling for the creation of a Palestinian state and the holding of an international conference of those determined to "save the

peace process."

Mr. Jospin said the statement — which flew in the face of U.S. and Israeli positions — "demonstrates the readiness of our two countries to do anything to avoid the worst."

Mr. Mubarak began a three-day visit to France on Monday to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which has been deadlocked for more than a year.

He called Tuesday for greater international pressure on Israel to fulfil its commitments to the Palestinians.

"We hope for a more active and stronger French and European role to press upon

Israel the necessity of respecting its commitments, to stick by its promises and not to put forward groundless pretexts for not doing so," Mr. Mubarak said.

The main obstacle to progress in Israeli-Palestinian talks is the issue of Israel's overdue withdrawal from part of the West Bank, as promised under interim peace accords.

U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton backed the idea of a Palestinian state in a statement earlier this month but Washington officials have refused to publicly support the idea.

Greece rejects bundling disputes with Cyprus

ATHENS (AP) — Greece on Tuesday rejected any attempt to link its long-standing disputes with Turkey to a solution for the Cyprus problem.

Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos also said efforts such as the U.S.-led initiative to reunite the war-torn island were doomed to failure unless Turkish Cypriots soften their stance on the issue.

Mr. Pangalos added, "Greece will not slide back into a situation of an Ottoman empire subject," to solve its disputes or link them with Cyprus.

"There will be no package of any kind," he said. "We are not demanding anything from Turkey, and any negotiations would take on a one-sided form of pressuring Greece to accept one of Turkey's demands."

In Nicosia, spokesman Christos Stylianides echoed Mr. Pangalos saying "the government clearly rejects any such approach."

Israeli premier praises Swiss efforts to resolve Holocaust accounts

TEL AVIV (AP) — The head of the Jewish state thanked Swiss President Flavio Cotti Monday for his efforts in seeking a resolution to the sensitive subject of recovering the lost assets of Holocaust victims.

"I've expressed Israel's appreciation for the steps taken by Switzerland, by the Swiss government, in uncovering the truth and restoring justice for Holocaust survivors and heirs of victims," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a joint press conference with the Swiss president.

Mr. Netanyahu spoke out against the vocal agitation of some Jewish organizations who criticize the Swiss for not doing enough to compensate heirs of bank depositors who died at the hands of the Nazis.

"I want to make it clear that the state of Israel believes that this should be handled with

great care and great sensitivity. There is no room for extreme or bellicose statements," Mr. Netanyahu said, adding, "we are not at war with Switzerland." Among Switzerland's efforts to make up for any wrongdoing are a fund set up by the major Swiss banks to help needy survivors of the Holocaust, and a panel set-up to investigate claims to assets in Switzerland.

Mr. Cotti in turn praised Israel's approach to the emotional issue.

"The statements you have made contribute to a calmness," Mr. Cotti said.

During a state dinner, the two leaders discussed the current status of peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians.

Switzerland is a large financial contributor to humanitarian and economic aid to the Palestinians as part of the peace process.

Othello insists Desdemona too 'wimpy'

TEL AVIV (AP) — Knocking out the leading lady, breaking his hand, fencing match and slapping Desdemona so hard she stomped off the stage — Othello has been suspended. The Haifa Municipal Theater also cancelled performances Monday and Tuesday. The actor insists that leading lady Maya Maoz was simply too wimpy for the role. He slapped her as part of my role and she left the stage in the middle," Mar told the Maariv daily, adding, "Every other day she faints and then I am suspended." In January, Maoz cracked her head on an iron bed frame and fell motionless during a scene in which Desdemona is attacked by Othello. On Thursday, Mar broke his hand while fencing as Othello.

Keith Richards injures ribs in his library while sober

NEW YORK (AP) — Keith Richards was reaching for a book, honest. Not the Wild Turkey. The hard-partying Rolling Stones guitarist took a tumble in his Connecticut home over the weekend, injuring his ribs and chest and forcing the band to postpone at least four concerts in Europe. Richards was in his library and had climbed on a chair to get a book, band spokeswoman Fran Curtis said. The Stones were to launch the European leg of their tour in Berlin on Friday. They postponed shows through at least May 28.

How to woo a beauty

NEW YORK (AFP) — So what does it take to woo and win film bombshell Sharon Stone? It helps, according to the New York Times, if she beats you at Scrabble. "He knows so many more words than I do," she told the daily, speaking of her newspaper editor husband Phil Bronstein. Bronstein may be a wordsmith, Stone said, but he's no match for her at the popular board game. "I come from Hollywood. I have that shark instinct. He plays to make fabulous words. I play to win," she said.

Fistfighter makes president

MANILA (AP) — Philippine officials are looking for an American who duked it out with a highschool classmate named Joseph Estrada in 1953 — so they can invite him to Estrada's presidential inauguration. Estrada credits that schoolyard fight, which got both boys expelled, with setting him on the path that eventually led to the presidency. Foreign Secretary Domingo Siazon said Monday, "That guy changed Estrada's life." said Siazon, a classmate of Estrada in grade school and the first two years of high school. "If not for the fistfight, Estrada could have gone on to school and ended with another job."

Male diva Dana signs with Sony

LONDON (AFP) — Dana International, the Israeli transsexual winner of the Eurovision song contest, has signed a recording deal with Sony Music U.K., the company announced. The singer, who was born Yaron Cohen but had a sex change in 1993, will now release her winning track, "Diva," here on June 8. Under the terms of the deal, she will also put out an album later in the year, a Sony spokeswoman said. Dana, whose antics have outraged Orthodox Jews in her homeland, flew into London to sign the deal under heavy security after receiving a death threat.

Echoing Netanyahu's favourite theme:

Gore calls on Arafat to curb anti-Israeli rhetoric

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore called on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to curb his occasional anti-Israeli rhetoric and to combat terrorism consistently.

Echoing a favourite theme of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Mr. Gore said Mr. Arafat "cannot say one thing to the world and another thing to his own people." However, in a speech Monday night to the annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), a strong pro-Israel lobby, Mr. Gore did not declare the administration in opposition to a Palestinian state.

In fact, he said the future of the West Bank and Gaza was for Israel and the Palestinians to decide through face-to-face

negotiations.

Mr. Arafat hopes to build a state on the land, with its capital in east Jerusalem, and has declared he will act unilaterally if negotiations fail.

Mr. Netanyahu, who ended a week-long visit to the United States Monday night, had said repeatedly that Mr. Arafat's statements and actions at home belied his commitments in the 1993 and 1995 Oslo accords with Israel.

Mr. Gore brought an AIPAC dinner audience to its feet with much the same view. He said Mr. Arafat must declare "unequivocal acceptance" of Israel and combat terrorism 24 hours a day, 365 days a year — "not one second less." Also, like Mr. Netanyahu, Mr. Gore emphasized that peace agreements were not enough.

"Peace on paper is not the same as peace in the heart," he said, again to thunderous applause.

As the Clinton administration continued its disagreement with Mr. Netanyahu's government over how much territory Israel ought to relinquish to Mr. Arafat, Mr. Gore offered assurances for Israel's security and unshakable American friendship.

"Our special relationship is indestructible," Mr. Gore said.

"It doesn't depend on the peace process. It transcends the peace process." And, he said emphatically, "our differences are about means, not ends," implying the Clinton administration would not slight Israel even if the U.S. peace effort failed.

Mr. Gore, already popular among American Jewish voters, is preparing for a likely run for the presidency in 2000.

can determine its own security is welcomed by the Netanyahu government. The prime minister has opposed a joint U.S.-Palestinian demand for Israel to withdraw from another 13 per cent of the West Bank as apt to jeopardize the safety of Jewish settlers or even Israel itself.

"There will be no package of any kind," he said. "We are not demanding anything from Turkey, and any negotiations would take on a one-sided form of pressuring Greece to accept one of Turkey's demands."

In Nicosia, spokesman Christos Stylianides echoed Mr. Pangalos saying "the government clearly rejects any such approach."

Iran deal brings truce between EU, U.S., but not peace

By Paul Taylor
Reuters

LONDON — A U.S.-EU agreement to waive U.S. penalties on European firms investing in Iran's energy sector, removing a major source of aggravation in West-East relations and clearing the way for a potential wave of oil and gas deals with the Islamic republic.

In return, European Union (EU) countries pledged to step up cooperation against terrorism and tighten controls to prevent Tehran acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

The EU under pro-American British presidency also accepted, at least temporarily, a "best supporting actor" role in the Arab-Israeli peace process rather than seeking equal status with the United States.

But French President Jacques Chirac served a reminder that Paris still harbours such ambitions by calling for an international Middle East peace conference in a joint appeal with

European divergences on how to deal with Iran, Israel and the Palestinians.

"We have the makings of a 'tough cop/soft cop' division of labour, with the Americans playing the tough cop on Iran and the Europeans playing the tough cop on Israel," said Rosemary Hollis, head of the Middle East programme at

Clinton administration from doing, she said.

One example of such pressure is the European Commission's recommendation that the EU bar imports from Jewish settlements in the occupied territories from preferential trade access granted to Israeli goods.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned

at being excluded from the action by the American economic boycott of Iran.

The United States and Europe share a desire to see a more democratic, internationally cooperative Iran emerge from the current power struggle between moderate Islamists and conservative hardliners.

But U.S. officials are still concerned by Iran's efforts to acquire nuclear and missile technology and believe Tehran is still involved in arming and funding Islamist groups across the Middle East.

However, there are two key areas on which Washington and most European allies differ significantly — whether to lift sanctions on Iraq while President Saddam Hussein is still in power, even if it complies with U.N. arms inspections, and whether to call for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip if Israel rejects it.

On both issues, events in the next few months could test the

the EU on Tuesday that it would deny itself a role in Middle East peace-making if it took that step.

Washington also sees advantages in the Europeans engaging politically and economically with the reformist Iranian government of President Mohammad Khatami, although U.S. oil companies were angry

'Dealing with the Europeans on the Middle East has been far easier with Britain in the chair. Things would not be the same if it were the French'

Britain's Royal Institute for International Affairs.

"It's actually working quite well. But on the substance of policies, they really are in disagreement," Ms. Hollis said. The United States was not unhappy to see the Europeans applying economic and political pressure on the Israelis which domestic politics prevents the

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King, Queen leave

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Volume 23 Number 6844

King street

Netanyahu

commitment

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